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THE MARTLET

December 4, 2008 The University of Victoria's Independent Newspaper Vol. 61, No. 17 www.martlet.ca

Students not buying consumerism

International Buy Nothing Day inspires shoppers around the world to boycott holiday spending

Danielle Pope

With the holiday season working everyone into a buying frenzy, it's not a bad idea to step back and consider the cost — literally.

Buy Nothing Day, held on Nov. 28, is an international day protesting consumerism. And while the actual event may have passed, the message behind the day is something UVic students are saying needs to be remembered for the whole season.

Andrew Wade, a fifth-year fine arts student at UVic, says he avoids stores when possible anyway, but now is as good a time as ever for people to curb their buying practices.

"[Buy Nothing Day] can encourage people to take an extra second and consider, 'Do I really need this?' If that becomes a habit, it can make a difference," Wade said.

Buy Nothing Day is held the day after American Thanksgiving, also known as "Black Friday" — one of the busiest shopping days in the U.S. The day was originally created by Vancouver artist Ted Dave and promoted by Adbusters magazine. While the day was first recognized in September of 1992, it has evolved thanks to groups of social advocates and media coverage.

This year, various Facebook groups advocating for Buy Nothing Day boasted thousands of members before and after the event — a day celebrated as far away as Israel, Japan and Norway, and as close as UVic's campus community.

Third-year English student Sophie Wright is a member of one of the international "Buy Nothing Day" Facebook groups and said that participating in Buy Nothing Day has a special significance for her.

"Taking part in something like Buy Nothing Day [makes me] feel good about doing something positive for [the word], especially in times when global consumerism is all we hear about," Wright said.

While the event is intended as an informal day of protest, participants are encouraged to boycott purchasing anything for 24 hours in a concentrated display of anti-consumerism. While many hope this view carries over the season, some critics believe the day could make current economic matters worse, and could cause some people to just postpone the purchases they would have already made.

"In terms of economic activity ... I doubt this kind of event will have much effect at all," said Saul Klein, Director of Executive Programs in the Faculty of Business. "There is [always] the question of whether this simply moves purchases to another day. If so, there would be no impact."

Klein also says he's not sure which companies specifically would heed the message from Buy Nothing Day, and believes now is not the time to stop spending.

"Economic activity is certainly influenced by consumer purchases, [but] encouraging people not to buy things is not helpful at a time when governments around the world are trying to stimulate their economies through boosting spending," said Klein.

However, others still see the movement as a valuable idea throughout the holiday rush.

"The value of days like this is largely symbolic, and can be useful in raising consciousness about senseless consumerism," said Bill Carroll, a sociology professor at UVic, and the Director of New Social Justice Studies.

Carroll believes that while the day may cause people to stop and think, neither mass consumerism nor avoiding purchases is going to be a real answer.

"In the current context of the world, [the day] is paradoxical in a sense, since the global economy is in a state of crisis," Carroll said, noting it will take multiple factors to sink or save the economy.

Still, Wright admits that as a student she avoids mass buying anyway, but says that the more people stay true to the intent of the day, the better they can feel about taking a stand — and the more it will catch on. "Sometimes it's easy to forget what's going on," Wright said, "but it's not hard — you just find more positive things to do instead of shopping, like hiking and stuff."

JOSH SZCZEPANOWSKI PHOTO

Buy Nothing Day challenges people to consider foregoing the shopping frenzy that marks the holiday season.

UVic students' website aids national support for coalition

Sam VanSchie

Two UVic students are moving their rally for a coalition government off the web and into the streets.

Kyle Artelle and Jamie Biggar were disheartened by the recent Canadian election, when vote-splitting on the left meant the Conservatives gained almost 20 more seats in parliament with 170,000 fewer people voting for them — despite the fact the election had the lowest voter turnout ever recorded.

"A lot of people were upset. They felt their vote didn't matter," Artelle said of the election. "A majority were voting for change, but the government didn't reflect that."

Within days of the polls closing, the pair decided to do something about it. They started promoting the idea of a coalition government, whereby opposition parties would agree to join forces and govern co-operatively.

Artelle and Biggar started spreading this idea, starting with a bilingual Facebook group: "Canadians for a Progressive Coalition — Coalition Progressiste Canadienne," then a website and a petition. Later, a video filmed in Victoria and produced in Ottawa hit YouTube.

Now the two are getting phone calls from Green Party leader Elizabeth May.

"[May] was like, 'Who are you guys?' We're just university students," Artelle said.

The two have been speaking to media and watching their support grow. During the 20-minute interview, 200 people had added their names to a petition already 10,000-signatures strong.

"We get a shitload of emails everyday from across the country," Biggar said.

In the past week, the two have put schoolwork and other projects aside to focus on the movement. Artelle even quit his job.

See Students, p.5

JOSH THOMPSON PHOTO

Jaimie Biggar (left) and Kyle Artelle check the national hits on their site.

Redesign expected for uSource

Athena Noonan

The gears are in motion for a uSource redesign project that promises to give the current system a much needed face-lift.

The renovation project, led by UVic University Systems, along with involvement from the communications department, the registrar, the UVic Student Society (UVSS) and Grad Students Society (GSS), aims to address concerns raised by frustrated users of the system.

Functioning as the university web portal, uSource provides access to a range of resources, including secure records, email and online groups. The site tailors to various users.

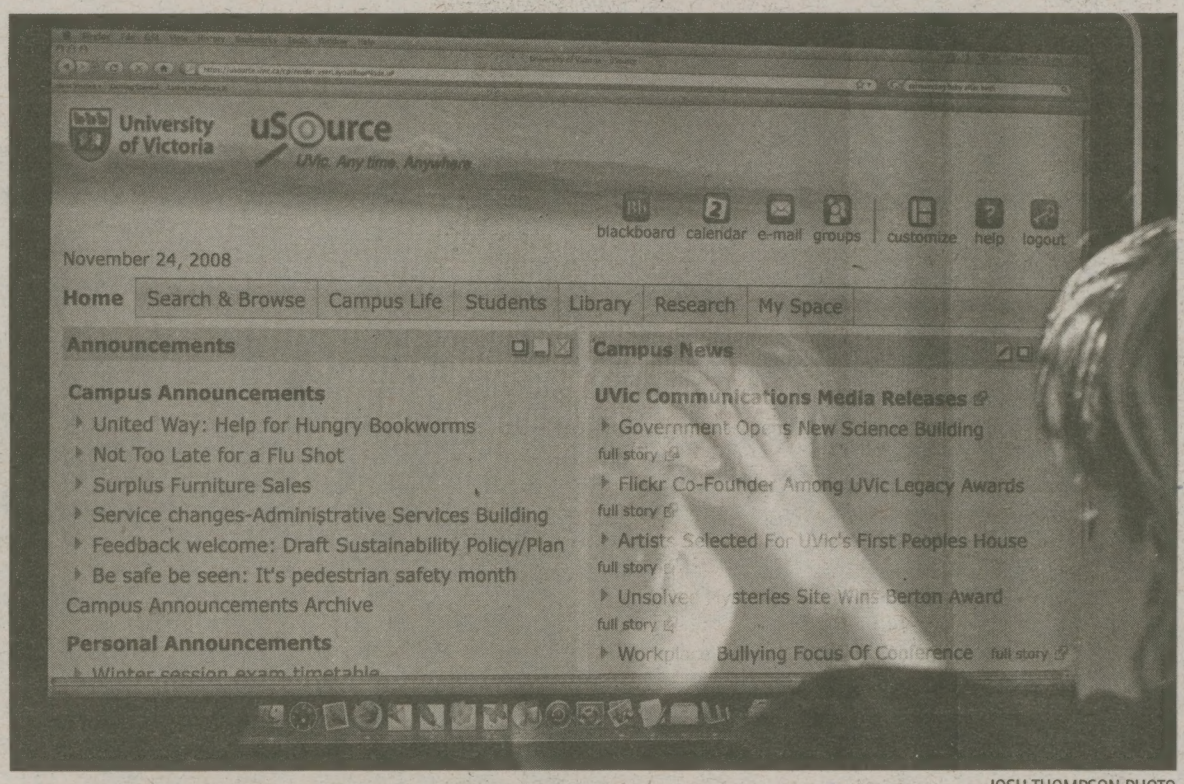
"Faculty and staff receive different information than students," said David Wolowicz, manager of web services with University Systems.

"The content is meant to be a customizable personal space."

Launched nearly eight months ago, the student version of uSource, created by the team Project Nova, was both commended and criticized. Issues regarding content quantity and customization were among the criticisms made, added Wolowicz.

Information garnered from survey responses showed that students and staff found the amount of information on the site overwhelming.

The Facebook group "10,000 strong against UVic's uSource" also noted the "excessive amount of links and general difficulty of finding information using uSource."



JOSH THOMPSON PHOTO

The designers of uSource are seeking student feedback to make the page more user-friendly next September.

Wolowicz said the redesign team would attempt to remedy problems with "new technologies and tutorials in the next version," to increase user comprehension.

University Systems also hopes to simplify the process of customizing the main page layout and is considering a search option. The latter may prove difficult, however.

"This is not a simple [search] application in a portal where the information available is different on a user to user basis," said Wolowicz.

The project is underway for other reasons as well; including the fact that uSource is already three years old and needs a software update.

Although still in it's early stages, University Systems plans to release the new version of uSource next fall.

One of the main challenges faced by the team is providing the same amount of information as the current system has, in a more straightforward way.

"There are a number of people out there using uSource now, and we don't want to take away the features they like," said Wolowicz.

Those who wish to provide comments or criticism about uSource can access a feedback form at the very bottom of the uSource login page.

Cell users beware of fraud, says Telus

Samantha Magnus

Student cell phone users beware: an e-mail has been circulating recently with the subject line, "Cell Phone Numbers Go Public this Month," and it's a hoax.

The e-mail goes on to remind people that "all cell phone numbers are being released to telemarketing companies" and that cell phone users should expect both to start receiving calls and to foot the bill for them.

The solution, according to the e-mail, is to call one of two numbers or visit the website, listed in the e-mail.

This will allow users to register their phone numbers in the Canadian National Do Not Call List, which blocks phone numbers from telemarketers.

The e-mail suggests helping friends by taking 20 seconds to forward it on to every person you know.

Telus denounced the e-mail as "fraudulent and dangerous" in a public service announcement issued on Nov 18.

The first phone number and the website address are both legitimate — they do belong to the Canadian National Do Not Call List, which was launched at the end of September.

The second phone number, however, is not.

According to Telus, the second phone number has been linked to telemarketing scams and should not be phoned.

The Do Not Call List was established by the CRTC (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission) to help relieve the onslaught of dinner-time and other inconvenient calls from telemarketers to Canadian landlines.

But registering a cell phone number may do more harm than good.

It is unlawful for a telemarketer to call any number on the Do Not Call List for 31 days after the number is registered.

Companies breaching the rules are subject to up to $15,000 in fines.

However, many types of organizations are exempt. The long list includes pollsters, researchers, charities, political parties and candidates, newspapers, companies that already have a relationship with the customer (within 18 months of a purchase from the company, or within six months of an inquiry about a product or service) and companies that have obtained expressed consent for calling.

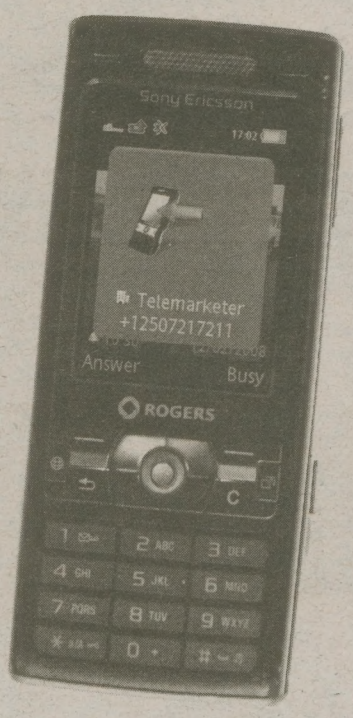
Last week, CBC news reported that thousands of Canadians registered on the list called into the CRTC to report receiving more calls from telemarketers — not less.

The generous number of exemptions on the list may be to blame for the increased calls.

The CRTC is not encouraging cell phone users to register their numbers unless they are already receiving unwanted calls from telemarketers.

Telus is reassuring their six million cellular customers that their own lists are secure.

"We understand our customers want to keep their cellphone [numbers] private, and have no intention of releasing those numbers to anyone," wrote Telus representative Shawn Hall in an e-mail.



JOSH THOMPSON PHOTO

Cell phone users warned not give out their number to telemarketers

No other telephone companies have issued any response to the e-mail scam.

"What we obviously have concerns with is emails going out with wild, inaccurate statements that could scare people and even create damaging urban myths about Telus and the registry," wrote Hall.

On the first day of the Do Not Call List, their website received nine million hits, and an estimated 1,562 calls were attempted every minute — enough to crash the system for most of the day.

The CRTC estimated that between the phone and the internet, as many as 80,000 people were trying to access service at the same time.

Part of the rush was due to prolonged anticipation; plans for setting up the Do Not Call List started in early 2006.

The U.S., on the other hand, has boasted a successful National Do Not Call Registry since June 2003.

On the first day of the Canadian List, the American registry already held over 172 million phone numbers.

The two systems are similar, but the Canadian system requires participants to re-register their numbers every three years, while registration in the American system is permanent.

Similar e-mail hoaxes were circulated in the U.S. in 2006. The Federal Trade Commission responded with a news release reiterating that cell phone numbers will not be made public, and that "it is not necessary to register cell phone numbers on the National Do Not Call Registry to be protected from most telemarketing calls to cell phones."

However, the Federal Trade Commission suggests that do-not-call registries can actually help telemarketers by saving them the time of calling customers who are not interested or not receptive to telemarketing.

In Canada, annual revenues from telemarketing increased seven-fold between 1998 and 2006, raking in $2.8 billion in 2006 alone. Two-thirds of Canada's call centres are in Ontario.

It remains to be seen how the list may impact telemarketing as an industry.

News reviews

NAY!

The Carleton University student council annoyed their constituents when they made an uninformed decision about funding Cysic Fibrosis research.

On Nov. 24, all but two councillors voted in favour of seeking a "more inclusive" charity for their September Shinerama fundraiser.

The board based the decision on an erroneous belief that CF "only affects white people, and primarily men." The national media had a field day.

Young girls, people of African or Asian heritage and others with the disease that didn't fit the white male profile were on television as proof that CF affects everybody.

Then, in an emergency meeting on Dec. 1, the council voted unanimously to rescind the motion and continue with the charity drive that gave $37,000 to CF this year.

At the meeting, the hall was filled to capacity and students listened to the debate from the hallways. One long-time council member apologized for supporting the previous motion, and resigned. A petition is calling for impeachment of the others who supported the motion, including the president.

YAY!

Access UVic has found an interim-representative to sit on the UVic Student Society board of directors.

David Foster is a politically-savvy new student to UVic, who frequently spoke out about financial issues when he watched UVSS board meetings and the Annual General Meeting from the gallery.

The society welcomed him to the table on Dec. 1, and he talked more about money, asking why the society didn't profit off Sue Johanson's visit and opposing a course union's request for $100 in order to throw a party.

Despite Foster's seeming obsession with reducing costs, Access UVic will ask in a March referendum for an additional $2 in funding per student per semester to be collected with student fees.

YAY!

The Students of Colour Collective, an advocacy group that operates out of the basement of the Student Union Building, is opening their doors to all students in an effort to be more inclusive and engage non-coloured students in their anti-racist action.

On Thursday, Dec. 4, from 1 to 4 p.m., the group will host an open house in their office (SUB B020), something they would have liked to do in September if a strike hadn't closed the building.

They also plan to dedicate a few hours every week to welcoming their non-coloured allies into their space in the new year, and will be hiring a resource co-ordinator to keep the office open more regularly.

Interested students can check out the group's website for details: www.uvss.uvic.ca/socc.

- Sam VanSchie

Team defies VIHA no-needle zone

With no fixed exchange site, some likely reusing supply

Sam VanSchie

If the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) won't allow a mobile needle exchange to distribute clean syringes and other supplies to intravenous drug users near Our Place, then Harm Reduction Victoria will do it themselves.

On Nov. 30, the six month anniversary of Victoria's only fixed-site needle exchange having been evicted from it's Cormorant Street location in the AIDS Vancouver Island (AVI) building, members of the grassroots action group set up a table to distribute boxes of needles on Pandora Avenue near Vancouver Street, defying VIHA's "no-go" zone that keeps the mobile needle exchange out of that area.

"We are going to keep putting pressure on VIHA with increasing action in the weeks and months to come," said Harm Reduction spokesperson Kim Toombs. "The first thing they need to do is drop this ridiculous 'no-go' zone that keeps clean needles away from people that need them most."

The forbidden zone stretches west-to-east from Blanshard to Chambers and north-to-south from Balmoral to Yates, and takes in Our Place and AVI — the exact area where most street people obtain services. It also omits the old St. John's Ambulance building where attempts failed to re-estabilish the exchange there.

Toombs stressed that some intravenous drug users don't want to leave the spot to go in search of clean needles — and without access in a location convenient to them, they may be reusing needles, which puts them at a higher risk of contacting Hepatitis C and HIV. It also makes it less likely that they'll dispose of the used needles properly.

A condo-owner, who could see the location where Harm Reduction was handing out the needles, came down from her apartment to object to their action.

"I don't care if you want to give needles out down on Cormorant Street or have them do their drugs indoors like in Vancouver, but I don't want this near where I'm living," said 81-year-old Agnes Stewart. "And I don't think anybody else wants it where they're living either."

LEAH SCHIETEL PHOTO

Harm Reduction supporters donned masks of VIHA CEO Howard Waldner, while Kim Toombs handed out needles near Our Place on Nov. 30.

Stewart said she's been seeing an increasing number of needles discarded in the area since the exchange closed, and thinks her right to safety is being compromised.

"I don't like to go out at night anymore," she said. "The problem is getting worse and worse."

In September, AVI, which is funded through VIHA, released a report showing that the number of needles supplied by the mobile unit was down about 23 per cent, from 35,000 a month at the old Cormorant Street facility to 27,000 in August from the mobile unit.

Now, only about 40 per cent of needles are being returned, compared to a 70 per cent return rate at the old Cormorant Street facility. The disparity is likely greater with the colder weather rolling in.

While some AVI staff were present near the tables where needles were being handed out, they did not wish to be identified by the press and stressed that AVI is not affiliated with Harm Reduction Victoria.

A spokesperson from AVI refused comment for any questions related to the demonstration or what VIHA is doing to reestablish a fixed site.

Sexual assault raises campus safety issues

Danielle Pope

A UVic student was charged with the sexual assault of another student on Dec. 2, marking one of the few sexual attacks to have been publicized around the campus community.

Eighteen-year-old Jonathon Aftergood was charged with a break-and-enter sexual assault on a female dorm resident last weekend. The woman, whose name will not be release for protection, woke up to find the stranger in her bed on Saturday at 1 a.m.

The police would not comment on the details of the assault, though it was noted that there was no sign of forced entry.

The man and woman did not know each other, according to the report, and were from separate dorms. However, the university decided not to publicize the assault for fear that it would "raise students' anxiety" in the last week of classes.

Campus Security was unavailable for comment at the time of publication.

Saanich police Sgt. John Price said that violent crimes are relatively low in the area, and that stranger-on-stranger attacks are extremely uncommon. Price said that information on the attack wasn't released until late, as authorities felt that community risk was minimal.

"From a student point of view and a safety point of view, this serves as a violent reminder to people of the importance of keeping doors locked," Price said.

That said, Price believes the situation becomes a balancing act between recognizing safety and becoming overwhelmed by fear.

Aftergood will be allowed back on campus to write his exams through the month of December, but only with a security escort.

> "UVic has no official record-keeping procedure on sexual assaults on campus, so a lot of assaults go undocumented."
>
> – Robin Tosczak
> Anti-Violence Project

Robin Tosczak, the co-ordinator of UVic's Anti-Violence Project (AVP), says the key is to realize that situations like this happen all the time — they just don't always make the news.

"UVic has no official record-keeping procedure on sexual assaults on campus, so a lot of assaults go undocumented," Tosczak said. "[Meanwhile], our role is mostly about prevention, education and support work."

Tosczak believes that fear mongering isn't the answer to crime prevention, neither is avoiding the issue. She does think UVic has a responsibility to recognize that these issues do play out on campus.

"You don't create safety by having women lock themselves up in a dorm room ... but you don't want people to ignore the issues either," Tosczak said. "[Sexual assault] doesn't happen because UVic is a party campus or because it's dangerous—it happens because it's a social problem that affects everybody."

Students affected by sexual assault can reach AVP by emailing anti.violence.project@gmail.com, or can call the NEED Crisis Line at 250-386-6323.

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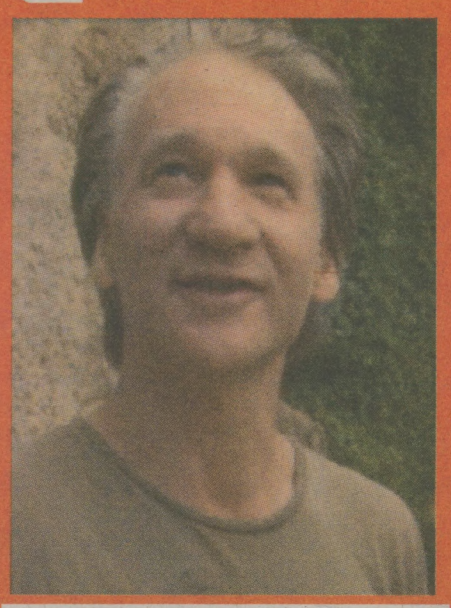

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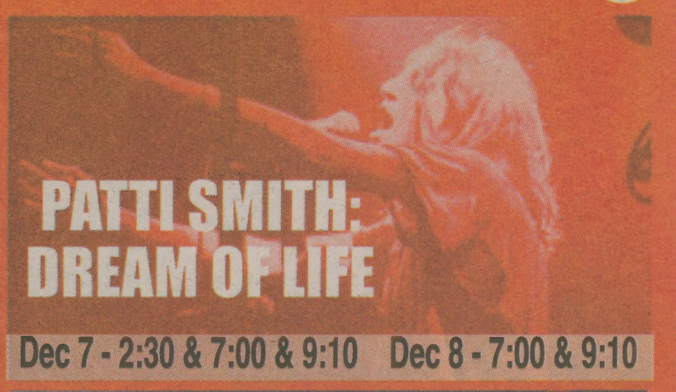
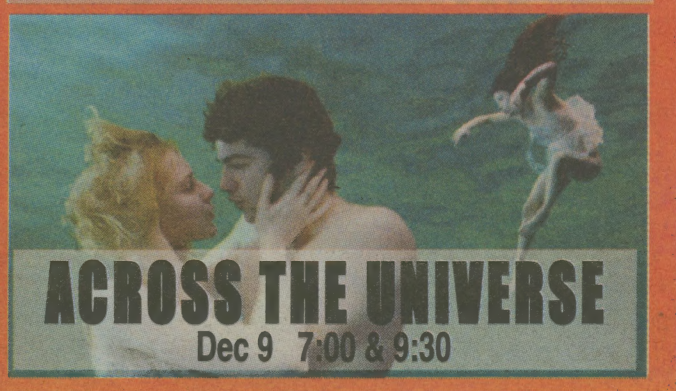


PATTI SMITH: DREAM OF LIFE
Dec 7 - 2:30 & 7:00 & 9:10 Dec 8 - 7:00 & 9:10



ACROSS THE UNIVERSE
Dec 9 7:00 & 9:30

This week in Martlet history

Dec. 2, 1965 – The SUB hosted a reasoned and, at times, dramatic appeal by speakers who declared themselves conscience-bound to deride the war in Vietnam as "immoral, unjust and unwise." More than 80 students and members of the public attended the event, which was sponsored by the Victoria chapter of the Student Union for Peace Action and the Citizens' Committee to End the War in Vietnam. A Victoria High student who attended the rally, which coincided with one in Washington, D.C., challenged the notion that war can settle anything, saying that war only leads to more war. Marches, sit-downs and vigils serve the purpose of making people think, contended the speakers.

Stories from the Martlet archives

Dec. 1, 1988 – UVic Bookstore manager Trudy Martin said that theft was on the rise, with eight people handed over to Saanich police over the course of the fall term. The rise in shoplifting mainly consisted of "really ridiculously small items" like candy bars, pens and envelopes. Still, Martin said that it didn't matter what items were stolen because theft is theft. Shoplifting losses represented one to two per cent of sales over the previous year for the bookstore, making the thefts prompted the installation of a camera over the candy aisle, greater use of store detectives and the relocation of the pharmacy to a more observable location.

Dec. 4, 2003 – World AIDS Day, observed globally on Dec. 1 each year, passed largely unnoticed at UVic. UVSS chair Jude Coates said that he thought that the Society of Students with Disabilities was taking the lead on the day of awareness so he "took it off [his] radar." Recognition for World AIDS Day in Victoria and around the world was said to be very low compared to previous years. Jim Oliver, an educator with AIDS Vancouver Island, said that even though 50 million people around the world were infected, AIDS is "not newsworthy anymore." Oliver went on to cite statistics that indicated AIDS had become most prevalent among women aged 16-24, and that by June 2002, 51,470 Canadians had received positive HIV test results. Of those, 13,357 had died.

- Cody Willett

Project aids Aboriginal students

Kailey Willetts

A UVic pilot project to improve the success of Aboriginal students in post-secondary education is having positive results, according to a study by UVic and the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation (CMSF).

The LE,NONET project is working to provide better financial aid, create a welcoming environment and establish links with surrounding First Nations communities. The project has been successful in these efforts, according to the LE,NONET Interim Evaluation Report.

The results of the report were announced at a ceremony at the Maltwood Gallery on Nov. 25.

The ceremony was opened with a welcome song by elder Butch Dick and speakers included UVic President David Turpin, CMSF Executive Director and CEO Norman Riddell, LE,NONET Co-Principal Investigator Chris Lalonde and students from the project.

"The interim results did indicate that the LE,NONET participants were about half as likely to withdraw," said Sarah Hunt, another co-principle investigator for the project.

LE,NONET is a Sencoten word that means "success after enduring many hardships."

The LE,NONET program includes bursaries of up to $5,000, a student-mentoring program that matches new Aboriginal students with returning ones, community internships worth course credit and funding that connects Aboriginal students with First Nations land-based communities. It also features Aboriginal urban organizations and campus-based research apprenticeships that connect students with faculty members in their areas of interests. The project also offers Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training for staff and faculty that prepares UVic faculty members to act as advisers to research apprentices.

"My involvement with the LE,NONET Project has greatly added to my overall experience at UVic," said Kendra Underwood, a fourth-year history student. "The LE,NONET Project has opened up so many doors for me, both culturally and professionally. It has assisted me to work in my home Wsanec community and has helped me to view my time at the university not just academically, but holistically as well."

> "The LE,NONET Project has opened so many doors for me."
>
> – Kendra Underwood
> History student

Hunt said that LE,NONET aims to provide students with connections and community at UVic, as many Aboriginal students come from close-knit communities with small populations.

"Having that cultural and community connection at UVic is something that might keep a student here," said Hunt.

Project Manager Yvonne Rondeau said that the Aboriginal population is the fastest growing in Canada, yet this is not reflected at many universities.

The LE,NONET project is designed to help Aboriginal students overcome barriers keeping them from obtaining university degrees.

"It just sort of makes sense, from a larger point of view," said Rondeau, adding that there are a lot of jobs that need to be filled in Canada.

Seventy-seven per cent of the program's 139 participants reported their participation helped them develop their sense of self as an Aboriginal person and 87 per cent said their participation helped build a sense of connection to the Aboriginal community on campus.

The project now in its third year, will continue until July 2009. Then, a final report will compare results of Aboriginal students at UVic who participated in the project with those who attended UVic but did not participate.

The final results will be submitted to CMSF, who worked with UVic to develop and fund the project.

A report containing the final results will be released in December 2009. Rondeau hopes aspects of the project will continue.

"The hope is that [the university] will want to sustain," Rondeau said. "The problem is securing funding."

LE,NONET will be holding an event Jan. 22 featuring participants talking about their experiences. More information will be posed on their website, found through the UVic homepage.

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Continued from p.1

Students vie for change

"We have a chance to help change history here," said Biggar, as both he and Artelle squirmed in their seats, running on adrenaline. "The Conservatives are going to spend millions of dollars to try to discredit this movement. They've already started swarming media and online communities with scripted arguments against this. We need our supporters to swarm back."

The main challenge, Biggar said, is just informing people about what a coalition government is and what it could mean for Canada.

"We aren't saying who's going to lead the coalition — that's up to the parties to decide," Artelle said. "We just want to inform Canadians and ask them to support a coalition. If the majority do, then in a democracy we should see that change."

Finding a majority of Canadians means reaching out to people who currently feel apathetic toward federal politics, and getting them to see that there is room for change. Youth are a major target, and have been the driving force behind encouraging support for a coalition.

"After what happened in the States, I think a lot of young people have woken up to what is possible when people work together," Artelle said. "It's not the leaders that rule the country, it's the people."

Biggar said that he's encouraging coalition supporters to band together in their own cities and start talking to people.

"At this point, we need to move off the Internet and into places where regular Canadians engage. We need to be on talk radio, [sending] letters to the editor, talking to our friends and neighbours," Biggar said. "That's what I tell every person who emails me — when I find the time to get back to them all."

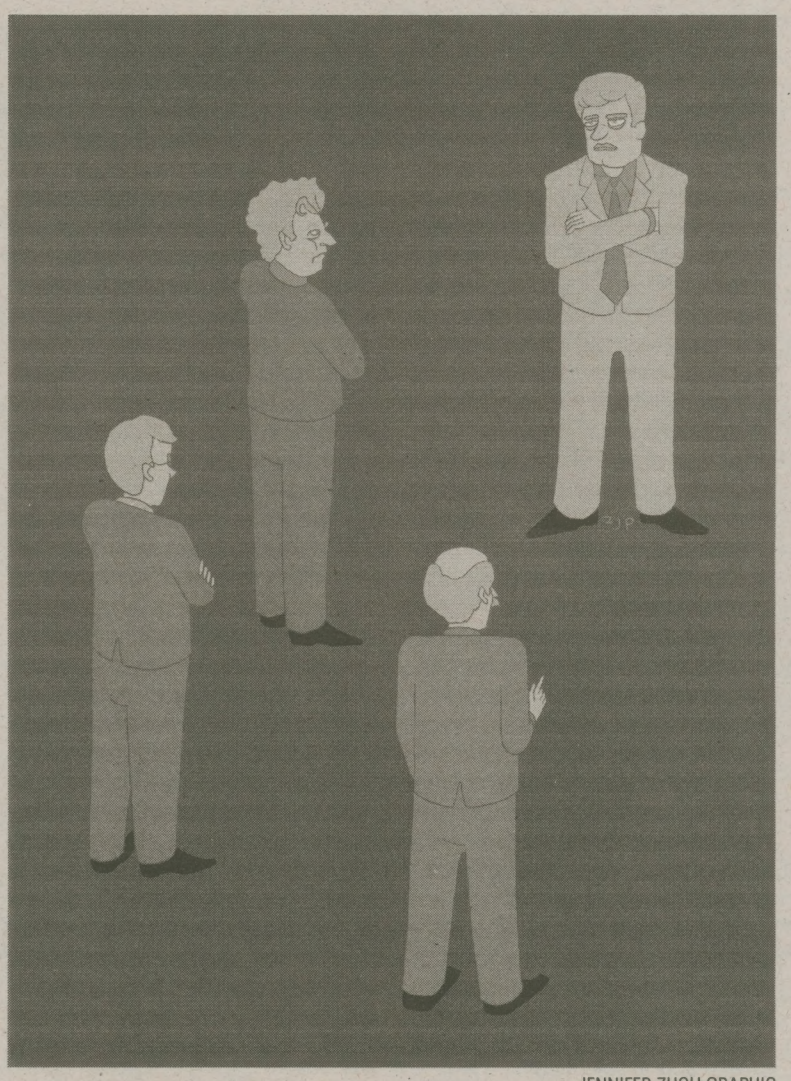
However, there's still about one nasty note for every 10 emails of support. People who oppose a coalition call Biggar a traitor or accuse him of supporting a government coup. He's not discouraged.

"I'm ridiculously nice when I respond," Biggar said. "We're not anti-Harper, we're pro-coaltion. We see a potential for progressive change and a lot of people are interested in it."

Harper's government on the ropes

Political crisis threatens to unravel once tightly disciplined Conservatives

Cody Willett



JENNIFER ZHOU GRAPHIC

Opposition parties in the House of Commons aim to come together on Dec. 8 to vote "no-confidence" in Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government. Such a vote, if it passes, would bring the government down only two months after it won a strengthened mandate in an election with the lowest voter turnout ever.

However, instead of having another election, the opposition has agreed to form a Bloc Québécois-supported Liberal/NDP coalition government.

A series of provocative measures contained within Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's Nov. 27 economic update triggered the crisis. The update provided no stimulus to the struggling Canadian economy, despite a global consensus that governments must help jump-start their economies to avoid deepening the global recession.

The update instead promised to deny public servants their right to strike for three years, and to slash public subsidies for political parties that are worth $1.95 for every vote earned. The cash-for-votes system was introduced in 2003 as a way to compensate for a ban on corporate and union donations and, if eliminated, would have financially ruined all parties but the Conservatives.

Opposition leaders, frustrated by Harper's reversal on pledges to reign in partisanship, seized upon the opportunity to call the PM unable or unwilling to help struggling Canadians.

UVic political science professor Dennis Pilon says that the Conservatives misjudged the oppositions' resolve. He also said that while opposition leaders were unsure just how popular the Conservatives really were before the last election, the limits of the Conservatives' electoral appeal was revealed to be about 37 to 38 per cent of the popular vote.

"There is no need for an election," Pilon said. "The PM is just grandstanding. On funding, it is the PM who has made this issue political, not the opposition parties."

In a letter signed on Dec. 1, opposition leaders Stéphane Dion, Jack Layton and Gilles Duceppe committed to Canadians that their parties would work together to defeat the Harper government and co-operate on measures to stimulate the economy.

The Prime Minister can still save his government by asking Governor General Michaëlle Jean to suspend the current sitting of Parliament so that the Dec. 8 vote doesn't take place.

Before the ink was dry on the coalition agreement, the public relations war for the hearts and minds of Canadians broke out.

Conservative supporters called the possibility of the coalition taking over government a "coup d'état." Meanwhile, Harper and his MPs chided the Liberals for teaming up with "the socialists" during an economic crisis and for "doing a deal with the devil" by relying on the separatist Bloc for support — moves Harper himself had taken as Leader of the Official Opposition during the Liberal minority of 2004.

Meanwhile, coalition supporters pointed out that coalition government works all over the world and that the choices of nearly two-thirds of Canada's electorate would be represented in the new government. Green Party Leader Elizabeth May has come out in support of the coalition and says that she has talked to Dion about being appointed to the Senate so that she could participate in government.

The last time Canada changed governments without an election was in 1926, and the last coalition government dates back to Sir Robert Borden's Conservative/Liberal government of 1917-1920.

Harper claims that a coalition government taking power from the Conservative government is "un-Canadian" and "undemocratic," but Pilon disagrees. He says that Canadians don't elect governments directly – they elect 308 individuals who may organize in any way to form government if they have the votes.

"Legally, the process of government formation is the product of winning votes of confidence in the House of Commons and negotiations with [the Governor General]," said Pilon.

Pilon maintains that as long as Harper's minority government doesn't have the votes to pass its legislation, Canada's parliamentary system allows the Governor General to let the group of MPs with enough votes to legislate form government if the group appears stable.

The Dec. 1 agreement committing the Liberals and NDP to a 30-month coalition with the support of the Bloc until June 2010 is aimed at projecting such stability.

Pilon points out that, constitutionally speaking, if Harper loses a vote of confidence in the House of Commons, the Governor General can either call a new election or ask the Leader of the Official Opposition to attempt to form a government.

He says that Canadians deserve to know if another configuration of the current crop of MPs can do a better job of governing before the country is launched into another multi-million dollar election during a recession.

"It would be irresponsible and possibly unconstitutional for the Governor General not to at least give the opposition a chance to form a government," said Pilon. "There is nothing undemocratic about the current opposition parties attempting to replace Harper's minority government with a coalition ... they are behaving exactly as our constitutional inheritance suggests they should."

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Young Conservatives fold two years in a row

Students may be deterred by the fact that they would face a hostile UVic environment

Scott Daly

The Conservative Party of Canada has failed to establish a youth wing at UVic for the second straight year.

Jacob Helliwell, who tried to start up the Young Conservative (YC) club last year, believes most potential members are simply too busy with other commitments to revive the political group.

"I had the intention of starting up a new YC with a friend of mine last year," said Helliwell. "We were approved for the fall term but when the spring term came around, my friend and I were both very active [with] other clubs and organizations within UVic."

Before the club's demise in 2007, YC's emailing list averaged between 90 and 120 people with a core of 10 to 20 members regularly attending meetings and helping to organize club functions.

As of yet, no one has taken the initiative to restart the club.

Jarrett Plonka, who served as president of YC from 2004 until early 2007, says that many are likely deterred not only by a lack of time, but by the fact that many feel they would face a hostile environment if they did organize or join a Young Conservative club.

"It's a pretty thankless job to run a club," said Plonka, adding that many functions he tried to organize suffered from either poor attendance or administrative hurdles. Plonka says that even when the club was still operating, members' other academic and social commitments usually prevented the club from being very active.

Helliwell believes that while the absence of a Conservative youth club on campus is likely not hurting the party, it is affecting the solidarity of conservative members on campus.

"Making a difference and having your opinions heard is far easier when you have people backing you up," said Helliwell. "Without a club on campus, I think it is difficult for politically knowledgeable conservatives to express their views on why they have the best ideas to bring Canada into a better future."

JOSH THOMPSON PHOTO

Jarrett Plonka and other UVic Young Conservatives blame little time and student hostility for inactive club.

Before the YC disbanded, the club was active in recruiting volunteers for local campaigns, organizing social events, attempting to bring in guest speakers and circulating a petition calling for the criminalization of date-rape drugs.

Those interested in becoming involved with or organizing a UVic Young Conservative club are encouraged to email ycoc.uvic@gmail.com.

Turnout in local elections same, even with raised awareness

Kat Eschner

Despite efforts by local groups to increase voter turnout, the number of people who voted in the Victoria and Saanich municipal elections this year was almost the same as that of the last election.

With 65 more ballots cast than the 2005 election, voter turnout in Victoria remained steady at 27 per cent. Saanich saw improvement by one per cent as it moved to 20.61 per cent turnout.

Traditionally, municipal voter turnout has been low in Canada. However, local voter activism groups in local municipalities stressed the importance of a municipal vote in the political process.

The Saanich Civic League (SCL), a community organization, formed about a year ago with the goal of increasing voter turnout. Representative Sher Morgan pointed out that the electorate in Saanich had increased by over 1,000 people. This means that while the voter turnout percentage was almost unchanged, about nine per cent more of the electorate actually voted.

She attributed this success in part to measures taken by the UVic Students' Society and the municipality.

"The Saanich Civic League and the UVSS worked closely," Morgan said.

The two groups set up a "Mobilizing the Student Vote" table by UVic's Petch fountain prior to the election. Morgan said that having advance polling stations on campus, like what existed in the recent federal election, might be a good next step.

She also mentioned the voter cards sent out for the first time by the municipal election office. The cards list the locations of polling stations, times for advance voting and how to register.

The SCL website contains links to municipal information about where and how to vote, candidate profiles, all-candidates meetings and the results of SCL voter surveys. The SCL also runs an e-bulletin.

A similar group, Victoria Votes, runs a website in the Victoria municipality which offers similar information. Both websites stress the importance of the municipal vote.

"In contemporary society the most important government is your local government," said Morgan.

She said many of the responsibilities which belonged in the past to federal and provincial government have been downloaded to the municipal level.

"Local governments are now the biggest piece even in things like climate change, local food security, certainly affordable housing, land use, planning, growth strategies, transportation. Those are all municipal and regional district responsibilities now, and that's where you'll see real change," she said.

Saanich mayoral candidate Harald Wolf expressed dissapointment with the turnout.

"I suppose in light of the fact that in other places the rate actually went down, we're not doing so badly," he said.

Wolf said that part of the reason he ran in the election was to stimulate voter involvement, following Mayor Frank Leonard's two unopposed victories in 2005 and 2002.

"I'd hoped to do my part in increasing engagement," Leonard said.

The low turnout in Saanich was partly due to a lack of media coverage, he said. Wolfe said the eight-candidate mayoral race in Victoria received a disproportionate amount of media attention.

Both he and the SCL equate low voter turnout with low civic engagement.

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Quieter carts aid homeless recycling efforts

Sam VanSchie

You hear them before you see them: the rattling shopping cart, the bottles clinking together. They're the bane of some apartment dwellers who would rather recyclables be left in their bins. And they're digging out an existence in Victoria.

"Binners" are people who scour the streets and rummage through waste in search of bottles, batteries or other items they can sell to recycling depots or use for themselves. Often the best thing they've got to collect their goods is a rickety shopping cart, but with better equipment they can increase their productivity and improve their public image.

That's exactly what a Victoria-based project called Multi-Opportunity Trailer/Homelessness Emergency Response Shelter (MOTHERS) hopes to show through a pilot project that, on Nov. 18, gave four binners quiet, custom-made trailers along with bikes to attach the trailers to, as well as helmets and locks. In exchange, the binners agreed to participate in a research project, which has them video-taping their experience using the cart to show its impact on their life.

"The idea is we'll be able to use this footage as proof that indeed these carts make a positive difference in [a binner's] life, and hopefully will lead to more funding for more carts," explained Jutta Gutberlet from UVic's Communities-Based Research Laboratory, one of several partners in the project.

Tony Hoar, owner of Tony's Trailers who built the trailers for the project, is also part of the project. He's been giving modified carts and trailers to binners in Vancouver, Victoria and other parts of Vancouver Island for the past three years. Hoar already knows they're a success, if not by the growing waitlist of homeless people who want one donated to them, then by the binners who save to buy one.

"This woman, she collects disability insurance, but not enough to live on; she bought one of my trailers because she knew she could make money using it," Hoar said. "Now she's off the street and still binning with it."

The most basic carts Hoar makes are simply re-claimed shopping carts donated by stores when they're no longer being used. He removes the store's logos from the cart, puts bike wheels on it, applies decals to identify the cart as property of the homeless and then gives it away.

"They're quieter and it removes the stigma of theft from the people that use them, because it's clear they didn't steal this cart," he said.

The next step is to add a trailer arm to the cart so it attaches to a bike. He sells these trailers for about $500, and when binners use them it allows them to cover more ground.

With the $4,000 grant MOTHERS' project received, Hoar designed four new, more durable and multi-functional trailers. Each cart, made from the same steel as bicycles, has a single-person dome tent attached for the binner to sleep in at night.

"They call it their mobile home. It can be set up and put away in under 10 minutes," said Rose Henry, a formerly-homeless person who has been helping to video-document the project. "When you allow people to have their simple basic needs met, they give back to the community 100 per cent."

Henry explained that the binners recover resources that would otherwise go to the landfill. That environmental benefit is what drew Hoar to the project.

"I make the cart out of recycled material, and they're used by a zero-carbon person to collect more recyclable material, so basically they have a less-than-zero impact on the environment — unlike the big diesel trucks that the city likes to use to empty blue bins," Hoar said. "I'd like to see all recycling done by people power. It's really a win-win because these people get to make a living while cleaning up the city."

With the bikes and carts, binners report being able to double the area they cover in a day, and travel to parts of the city where there is less competition for bottle collection, meaning they can make up to $100 in about six hours.

"They can buy their own food, have their own shelter — it means they are relying on city services less," said Henry, noting that it costs tax payers $35 per night to keep a single homeless person in a shelter.

Still, there is a stigma attached to supporting binners. A listener poll by CFAX radio station in Victoria found that of nearly 650 respondents, half believed it was a "bad idea" to give homeless people specially-designed bike carts for collecting recyclables.

Gutberlet, who in 2007 published a report based on her interviews with over 150 binners, said that people who do not support the project often don't understand that binning is actually a job for some people.

"My research showed that binners are contributing to the community ... yet, these people are marginalized, stigmatized and harassed," Gutberlet said. "Many have a disability or addiction, but they don't want to be a burden on society."

Gutberlet said that offering binners a flexible way to generate an income is a source of empowerment for them, and for the 60 per cent of binners she interviewed who were homeless, it offered a real way to get off the street.

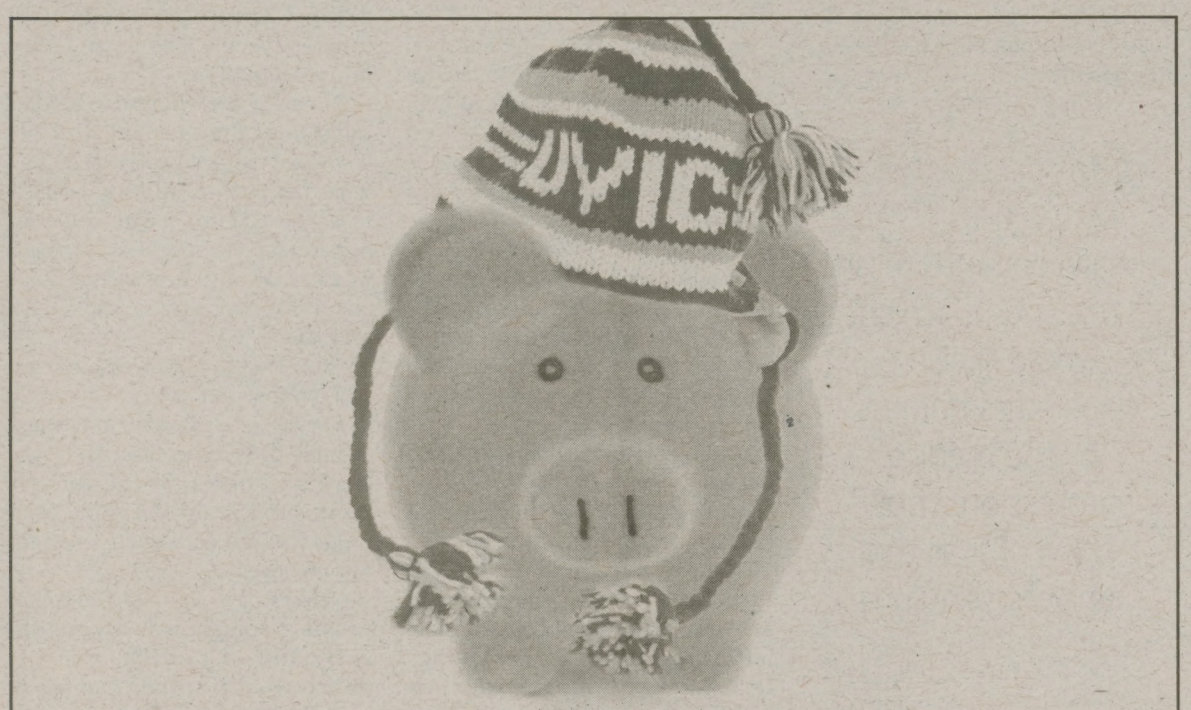
"It's not the solution for all homeless people, but for some it really helps," she said.

JOSH THOMPSON PHOTO

Beetlejuice, a Victoria binner, stands by his modified shopping cart.

The four binners who received modified carts from the MOTHERS project are all homeless and were selected based on a needs assessment. Gutberlet hopes to see the project expand as more people get behind it.

"Four trailers definitely isn't enough," Gutberlet said. "We need more support to get more money and materials for carts, and more people to build them. I'd like to see every homeless person who wants one be able to have their own."



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EDITORIAL

Photos steal holiday soul

Do you ever feel like a member of your family has joined forces with the paparazzi?

Every family has one. Whether it's an over-zealous uncle with too much time on his hands, a mom who needs to document every moment of a special holiday, or a dad who insists on posing his children in their new Christmas clothes, it seems like everybody has someone in their family who spends more time behind the camera than in front of it.

It may be a point n' shoot, a hefty gargantuan SLR, or a trusty ol' video camera, but everyone seems obsessed with getting on board of making their own holiday documentaries.

But are we missing the point?

Sure, it's nice to have an over-flowing album of photos. Some people like to make slide shows to send to relatives, or want to save that special pic of the family by the tree for next year's family newsletter. These are special memories, and happy times. Why not preserve them?

Well, for starters, no one looks their best when they've been dragged out of bed at 7 a.m. by their hyperactive younger siblings. It may be cute to see a 7-year-old in jammies ripping off the wrapping paper, but by the time we reach 15, maybe we don't feel ready for an early-morning close-up.

Also, don't you already have pictures from Christmas? When you look back through old albums, chances are you have an endless supply of birthday and Christmas photos. What about the rest of your life — is it any less worthy of your attention than an arbitrary holiday in the middle of winter? Why not take pictures on Boxing Day, or some day totally random, like Feb. 7?

This year, let's boycott Christmas photography. Rather than sitting idly by while our families snap picture after picture, demand to have a real, technology-free celebration. And instead of taking a picture of your brother or sister, just give them a hug.

Therefore, we've come up with this handy list of ways to avoid your photo-frenzied kin:

1. Wear a paper bag on your head while opening presents.

2. Sneak the memory card out of your parents' camera Christmas Eve.

3. Wear a reflective Christmas sweater.

4. Pull a Britney, and go without underwear when it's stocking time.

5. Open your presents in the bathroom.

Gone are the days when a photograph was a special thing, when soldiers carried a small dog-eared headshot in their military fatigues, or when lovers taped grainy photographs beside their beds. We live in the digital era, where each event is worthy of 763 pictures, a Facebook album and a YouTube video.

Look, there's the one where you're making the funny face.

There's the one where she's pretending to pick her nose.

Haha, he's pretending to pick his butt.

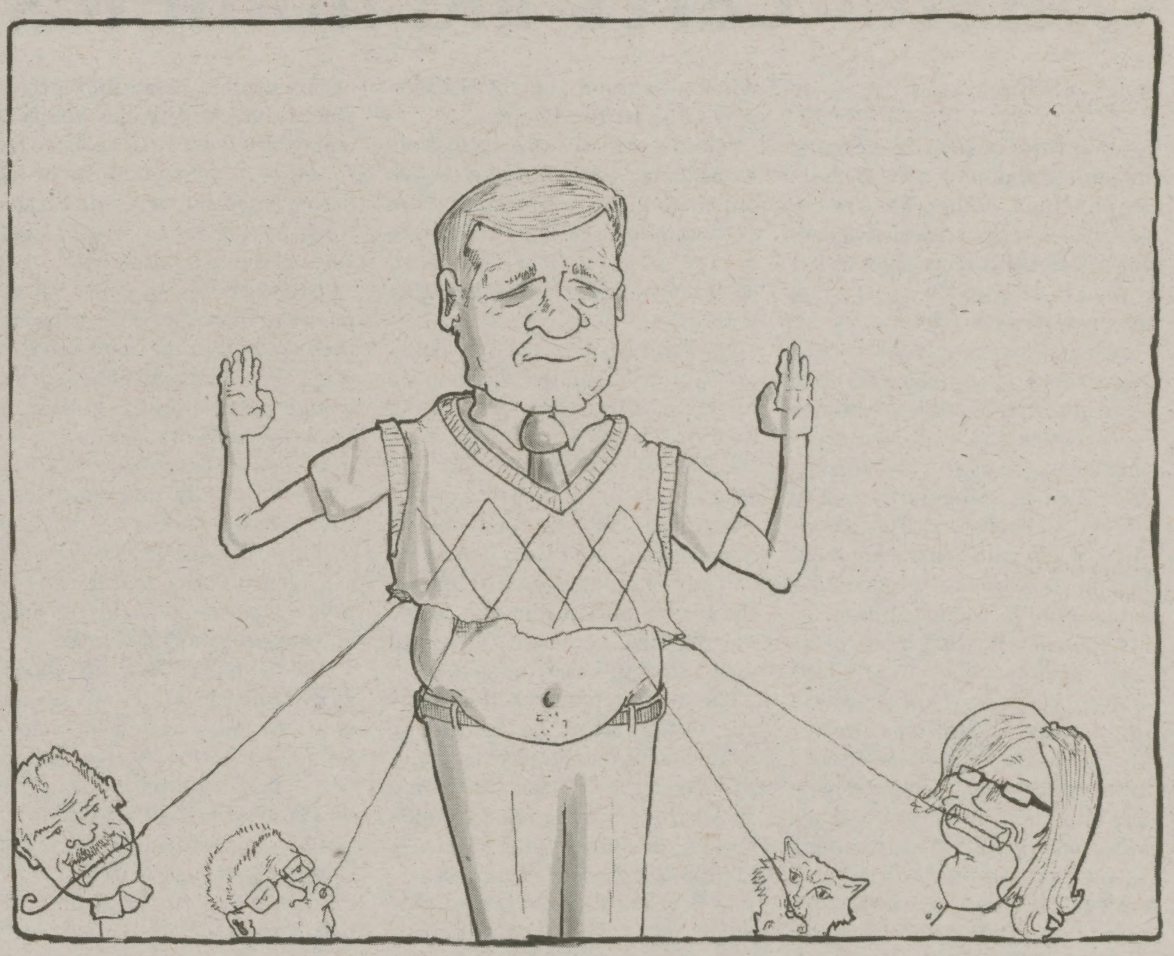
We really are that obsessed with ourselves. But the world doesn't need 500 pictures of you drinking too much eggnog and passing out on the carpet. It's gotten to the point where everyone spends more time uploading, editing and printing photos than actually celebrating the holidays. It's time to stop this madness.

If you spend all your time behind the lens of a camera, then you're not really engaging with the magical, fleeting moment that you're trying to capture. You're just watching it pass by.

Say cheese — or rather, don't.

Editorial topics are decided on by staff at our weekly editorial meeting at 2:30 p.m. every Friday in the Martlet office (SUB B011). Editorials are written by one or more staff members and are not necessarily the opinion of all staff members.

HARPER'S GOVERNMENT UNRAVELING



MARC JUNKER GRAPHIC

Hearing the music of the universe prevails

Jennifer Gait

Shortly after I first realized that I was going deaf, now 20 years ago, I noticed a low-pitched sound in my ears.

It was there intermittently and sounded like the wind in the treetops, a sound I have always enjoyed, so it didn't bother me. Over the years its constant pitch has become much higher.

> "I have come to relish this sound, which would likely be labeled as tinnitus by the medical profession. I now think of it as the universe singing."

I have come to relish this sound, which would likely be labeled as tinnitus (ringing in the ears) by the medical profession. I now think of it as the universe singing. Not only is it singing, it's singing to me and I am grateful for its song.

Luckily, it's not an alarm clock sort of noise, but rather it's as though the atmosphere around me is alive and thick with the twittering of pulsating quanta.

In my mind's eye, I see it as the auditory map of a million tiny sparks, like those released from the embers of a campfire when new log is thrown on.

Last weekend, at a Life Skills Coaching course, I realized that by labeling the noise "the universe singing" I had unwittingly taken a scenario that many people find annoying, and created a joyful situation simply by looking at it from a different perspective.

The whole three-day course was spent on learning how to help other people around us change their perspective.

As we practiced on one another, we all had many chances to change our own perspectives and to help others change their perspective on a myriad of problems. By the end of the weekend I could see the power of this concept in its ability to change people's lives.

What we see as reality is usually just our perspective. The problem with seeing something as real rather than as a viewpoint we have taken is that we limit our choices for action.

It's not easy to change reality, but relatively simple to change our perception of it, and when we do all kinds of new options open up.

Take the current market downturn for example. Many people are running around like Chicken Little crying, "the sky is falling." Others are gleefully rubbing their hands and quietly thinking, "what an opportunity."

Same situation — different perspectives.

Which group is likely to get richer? Likely not the first group, who will hoard away what's left of their investments or sell them, then take the little that remains and put it into GICs.

Some of the second group may fail, but on average they are more likely to buy solid but grossly undervalued funds or stocks and wait for them to rise.

By taking a perspective of opportunity, these people will be likely to recognize chances when they turn up. The Chicken Little group won't notice, or if they do, will not see opportunities as something to be acted on.

It's easy to see from an example like this that different perspectives are possible, and even helpful, but it's not so easy to apply the concept to everything in life.

Feeling irritated by a noisy roommate, getting poor marks on a paper, failing a course, having an unwanted pregnancy, or experiencing the death of a parent are all situations in which people tend to get locked into a perspective.

Of course we will grieve and feel sad if one of our parents dies, but if we take the perspective that it's a huge tragedy then we are more likely to get locked into a feeling of disempowerment and hopelessness than if we can look with love and gratitude on all that they gave us and all that they were.

Viktor Frankl, a Jewish neurologist and psychiatrist who spent WWII in a series of concentration camps, adopted the perspective that he was learning important information about survival that he could teach to his medical colleagues when the war was over.

Others saw their suffering as possibly somehow lessening the suffering of family members imprisoned in other camps, or put their own suffering aside and helped others in the camp. Those who found a perspective that had meaning for them were more likely to survive, and even thrive, than those who felt like victims.

Meaning is key in finding a new perspective. You'll know when you have it because the perspective will resonate joyfully in your body and emotions as well as in your mind.

Many previously unconsidered possibilities for action will arise from this new place. Where before there seemed to be no choice, there are now a number of things to choose from.

As for me, my choice now is to turn once again to the song of the universe.

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The University of Victoria's Independent Newspaper

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The Martlet Publishing Society is an incorporated B.C. society and a full member of Canadian University Press (CUP). We strive to act as an agent of constructive social change and we will not print racist, sexist, homophobic or otherwise oppressive copy. The Martlet is printed on 100 per cent recycled paper.

Martlet (SUB B 011)
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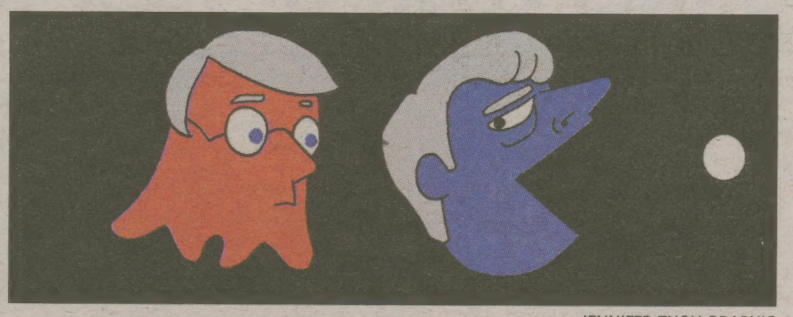
Checkmate to you, Mr. Harper

Spencer Anderson



JENNIFER ZHOU GRAPHIC

It looks very much like the next prime minister of Canada is going to be ... Stéphane Dion?

Weird? I know. Unlikely? Of course. Happening? Right now.

I'd say I saw the coalition coming, but that would be a lie. The NDP saw it coming, and the Bloc too, but it wasn't of their design. And I just wish I could give a little credit to the hapless Liberals for coming up with such an amusing alternative to another costly, unnecessary election.

But the credit can't belong to these three parties any more than it can belong to me. The real architect of this political bonbon belongs to the Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper.

Congratulations are in order, Prime Minister. Well done. You broke a fixed election date law to gain a stronger mandate, received it, and now you've united the Liberals, NDP and Bloc Québécois against you. You're about to lose government. No wonder they call you a chess player. Sorry to gush, but I have to go over how you did it, otherwise I might just burst.

Step one: begin the new parliament by promising a new spirit of co-operation and bipartisanship. Lulling the opposition into a false sense of security.

Step two: have the finance minister deliver an economic update. Have him insist that Canada will run a surplus, even though no one believes it. So far so good.

The next logical step would surely be to collaborate with the other parties to make adjustments to the economic statement, perhaps agree on a course of action for the next few months. Work together to create an atmosphere of stability and political good will. Adjust spending priorities to stimulate the economy. This would surely neutralize any opposition claims that you are untrustworthy and unwilling to compromise. Right?

No? Go on the offensive? No wonder you're the smartest guy in the room.

Step three: introduce (out of the blue, of course) a total cut of public funding for political parties and suspend the right to strike for all public-sector unions.

I get it now. Canadians were expecting you to manage the finances of the country in a thoughtful, responsible manner. Little did they know that the smartest course of action during economic downturn, instability and war would in fact be to go after the civil service and functionally cripple your political opponents.

Prime Minister, I know this is getting embarrassing, but I feel sorry for Dion, Layton and Duceppe. I mean, none of them thought they'd be ready for government in two years, let alone two weeks. Instead, you provided them with three alternatives:

1. Allow the economic update to pass, along with the cuts to the party funding on which all three opposition parties depend.

2. Go into another election, one which they would handily lose.

3. Form a coalition government.

Tough decision. Except now, sir, you are tempting fate. You've dropped the party funding cuts and the public-sector strike measures. You've promised to release a new budget early. Why are you trying to screw all your careful plans?

Best not to worry too much, I suppose. I get the feeling that the opposition parties have decided that the prospect of running a coalition is more palpable than allowing you to continue as PM. They appear to genuinely feel that they can rise above pettiness and meanness and work together to deal with real problems.

You've ushered in a new era of co-operation into Canadian politics, Prime Minister. Well done.

LETTERS

Fed up with theft

I'm really fed up with the lack of honesty and courtesy on this campus.

Over the past year I have lost a few personal items on campus, and they have not yet turned up at campus security or any of the other lost and founds.

They were not items of high monetary value, but had personal significance. I can only conclude that people have kept these things for themselves. I think this is really sad and all I can say to those people who are guilty of keeping my stuff or other people's stuff: it is only a matter of time before you lose something of sentimental value. Don't be surprised if you never see it again, because apparently there are a lot of people like you on campus.

Vanessa MacDonald
UVic student

Disability awareness needed

I have been quoted as saying a recent UVSS amendment regarding absenteeism was discriminatory towards students with disabilities. I would like to write about my reasons for saying so.

Students who live with disabilities often have to spend more time on academic work and other tasks of daily living.

Consequently, we have less time available for volunteer commitments, like serving on the UVSS board. As general directors or constituency reps we may need to send regrets because of constraints on our time due to disability rather than because of illness or emergency.

Instead of blaming individual directors, I believe we need to look at the underlying reasons for absenteeism.

Everyone starts out wanting to participate, but I know firsthand how painful and exhausting the UVSS meetings can become. I think our focus should be on creating a healthy working environment rather than enforcing attendance through bylaw amendments.

When all board members have an opportunity to participate in a meaningful way to something positive, and they feel valued and respected, there will likely be less absenteeism.

Kyla Berry
President, Access UVic

Sick and tired of bureaucracy

I'm sick and tired of the government. I've been waiting for my extended study permit, which I should have had a month ago.

Canada Post neglected to inform me that government mail can't be forwarded to a new address. What immigration call centre agents suggested was to pay $30 for a replacement copy.

I quickly sent the application for a replacement to the office here in Victoria and received a letter saying I can only apply for a replacement six weeks after the initial agreement.

The call centre agents in Ontario said I could do this right away. Who's running this show, anyway?

I phoned Ontario again. The agent had no knowledge of this six week rule and said my permit had probably been sent back to Ontario and should be automatically forwarded to my new address.

This is stressful stuff for an international student that needs to apply for a post-grad work permit, and with employers breathing down my neck for proof that I can stay in this country.

I know we're all human. I know we all make mistakes. But this is a matter of whether someone gets deported from Canada or not.

I want to stay in Canada, so the least we can ask for is some bureaucratic coherence amongst the people that are controlling things in this country.

Sebastian Eklund
UVic student

Kayak club not a frat

I would like to to respond to Grady Mitchell's recent article, "Kayak Club: UVic's only fraternity".

What bothers me most is the headline, especially in the context of the editorial "Frats don't jive at UVic" in the same issue.

The content of the editorial clearly describes what such organizations entail: "Fraternities are inherently exclusive and elitist organizations. They thrive on hazing, irresponsible drinking and misogyny. With their histories of racism, sexism and homophobia ..."

It is possible that these two pieces appearing in the same issue is coincidental.

However, the Martlet defined frats as elitist, racist, misogynistic, homophobic hotbeds of rape and violence, then dubbed the Kayak Club a fraternity in the banner headline on the front page.

Such an implication is either very irresponsible or, if accidental, very careless.

The UVic Kayak Club is one of the most active clubs on campus with weekly meetings and instruction, as well as several whitewater trips per month.

Dylan Anderson
UVic Kayak Club instructor

Disappointed about frat fear

I was disappointed by last week's editorial.

I wonder how familiar with these societies our editors are. Perhaps they are relying too heavily on a fictitious fraternal organization often depicted in Hollywood's films.

Yes, there have been reports of abuses within these organizations in the past. However, even at our own institution there have been alleged rapes, racist graffiti and, ofcourse, homophobia (all within the past year).

No one can deny that these have occurred within frats, but unfortunately, they have permeated all institutions at some point.

Let's not be too quick with our false victor's justice in dismissing the societies entirely. They have their place.

As with any social group, they help some students find friendship and meaning; they help with networking and job placement. They partner with charities like the ALS Foundation, Habitat-for-Humanity and emergency youth shelters.

So, I ask the editors to question if placing these organizations alongside the mafia is not a bit negligent. Perhaps they're not right for UVic, but that doesn't mean they should be discounted entirely.

Carley Seiler
UVic student

Further YPY controversy

Re: "No place for YPY on campus". Clubs policy, not individual students, determines whether there is enough demand on campus for a club to exist.

The minimum requirement for club status is 10 members; YPY has 40. If Mr. Thomas really wants to form a "Free Quebec" group, I urge him to find 10 members and seek ratification. Nothing would prevent such a group from receiving funding.

It is easy to use "religious bigot" as a catch-all phrase. In point of fact, however, YPY is not a religious club. It does not proselytize for any particular faith, nor does it use religiously based arguments in its discussions with secular proponents of abortion rights.

A "bigot," according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is "a fanatical adherent or believer; a person characterized by obstinate, intolerant, or strongly partisan belief." YPY is quite open to listening to arguments against its position through rational, peaceful, and respectful dialogue. One might also note that it is not YPY who is trying to shut down or otherwise discriminate against those who do not share its views.

Monica Murphy
President, Youth Protecting Youth

Happy? Sad?
Enraged? Engaged?

Tell us: letters@martlet.ca
The Martlet has an open letters policy and will endeavour to print every letter received from the university community. Letters must be submitted by e-mail, include your real name and affiliation to UVic, and have "Letter to the editor" in the subject line. Letters must be under 200 words and may be edited.

WAR OF WORDS

Is Santa Claus real, or just an elaborate hoax?

Will Johnson and Danielle Pope

Also known as Saint Nicholas, Father Christmas and Kris Kringle, Santa is the jolly Northerner who traverses the world in a sleigh, hand-delivering presents to deserving children ever year.

Everybody loves Santa Claus, but here's the question: is he real?

MARC JUNKER GRAPHIC

Will Johnson: I remember the day I realized it was my parents putting presents under the tree, not Santa Claus. I was up until midnight crying into my pillow. My parents had been lying to me all these years. They had betrayed my trust. Some of the magic in the world died that night.

The fact of the matter is this: there's no such thing as flying reindeer, it's impossible to visit every household on earth in a single night. There's no way one person can collect enough presents to give to every child in existence. Where would Saint Nick get the capital for this sort of enterprise? And how has he been doing this for so long, shouldn't he be long dead?

The invention of Santa Claus, immortalized in the 1930s by a Coca-Cola advertising campaign, is nothing but a sign of the creeping commercialization of an ancient holiday.

He came along to convince parents to buy, buy, buy.

It's time to face the truth: believing in Santa Claus is having faith in a vicious lie.

Danielle Pope: When one of my first-grade friends informed me there was no Santa, I pulled her by the arm over to my dad and demanded an explanation. My dad looked at us both and said: "Well, you believe in electricity don't you? Just because you can't see something doesn't mean it isn't working."

Unsatisfied, I went to my grandmother. When she told me that even in her aged years she would always believe in Santa Claus, I asked her why. "Because," she said, "magic happens this time of year. Sometimes it's an unexpected gift, other times it's a surprise visit or sudden snow."

But what about a man who can actually deliver presents under every child's tree? Sometimes, Grandma told me, even Santa needs a little help. But that makes everyone part of his magic.

Just like electricity, like air, like love and often faith, you can't always see something in action to feel it's effects — and those effects are what you believe in.

There really was a man named Saint Nick. And in 350 AD, this Greek Orthodox bishop secretly left a bag of gold in a poor beggar family's home one night to prevent a man from having to sell his three daughters for prostitution.

Since then, the myth has no doubt been elaborated. He's been known for caring for the hungry, for random acts of charity and, of course, for bringing gifts to children. Now his memory lives on in those willing to believe in the goodness and giving nature of a selfless person — and that makes Santa just as real today as he ever was.

Will Johnson:
I don't understand why people think self-imposed delusion is a positive thing.

My beef isn't with Santa Claus, specifically. He seems like a pretty chill guy, and his jolly visage makes for good Christmas decorations. He makes kids happy and wide-eyed, and if you're going to believe in anything, then Santa Claus is probably a pretty good choice. But how is that any different from believing in space aliens or bigfoot?

The fact is, these fake beliefs are designed to coerce people into doing irrational and stupid things. Sometimes they're harmless, like buying lots of presents or building gingerbread houses.

But other beliefs can drive people to do increasingly insane and destructive things, like slitting their wrists or blowing themselves up in the middle of a crowded square.

What's wrong with just telling kids, "Hey, your parents love you and every year they buy you presents"? Why do we need to invent a mythical figure just to tell our children that we care about them?

Danielle Pope:
What Saint Nick did centuries ago was something very human, which people can relate to — even today. Sometimes that humanity is lost on the idea that material objects, like presents, equal love.

But Santa represents something much bigger — he represents miracles, he represents belief in the impossible and he represents faith in each other.

It may be easy to argue that believing in myths is harmful self-delusion, and while Greek philosophy, Aboriginal traditions and various religions would disagree, the point is that you're right, believing in something "right" or "wrong" is purely subjective. What isn't subjective, however, is behaviour.

The thing about Santa is that he comes with a mantra of benevolent action.

Some people believe that having the man in the red suit around even detracts from Dec. 25 — but how can good will towards others ever take away from a holiday designed out of love?

Sure it's a slide when things delve into the Coca-Cola advertising mentality, but Santa still means something important to the world.

What we need to remember what old Saint Nick was known for — a defining act of charity. And as a famous editorial once made very clear, yes Virginia, every one of us is capable of that.

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CITY OF VICTORIA

Building blind ambition

Erin Lacharity

There have always been blind people in the world.

The problem is, I don't think sighted people see us as a political force or as politically active.

The recent protests against the film *Blindness* by blind people across North America are one example of our efforts to make our presence known and our voices heard.

As a blind woman, I reject the depiction of blindness in the film. I'm saddened that Jose Saramago, Nobel Prize winning author of *Blindness*, dismissed the deeply felt reaction of real blind people as "a display of meanness with no point at all."

However, many people have never met a blind person, and negative misconceptions are pervasive enough without Saramago's book and film adding to them.

As a blind person, I run into many misconceptions about what it must be like to be me. In a psychology class, the instructor thought that by blindfolding sighted people for an hour, they would get to know what it is like to live and function without sight.

I volunteered to go without my white cane so I could participate in the exercise. My classmates fumbled around, freaking out. They didn't realize that blind skills are created over a long period. It can't be experienced in an afternoon.

If anything, this exercise only reinforced the misconception that blind people are helpless, unemployable and lost in the world.

By the end of class, more people felt sorry for me and none of my classmates had learned about the coping mechanisms and skills I employ everyday.

If only the teacher had asked me for my advice, instead of simulating an experience that was so far from the reality of blindness.

When I was a student at Camosun, an individual in the disability office eagerly informed me that if I accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my saviour, He would return my sight.

She assumed I needed fixing because I can't see, and she assumed I wanted to change and not be blind. I don't. It's normal and respectable to be blind. It is not a deficiency or a result of my moral or religious conduct.

My political experience began with the Canadian Federation of the Blind. I heard others sharing what I had always felt about myself as a blind citizen. I began to learn our history. Advancements for the blind have been initiated by the blind, and we enjoy greater opportunities today because of our own advocacy work.

The history of sheltered workshops for the blind, weaving baskets and making simple furniture kept us busy and poor. Exclusion from the public school system and extremely limited access to meaningful work kept us sheltered and helpless.

This couldn't be further away from our true identity and worth.

We are normal people that cannot see. We are full citizens who are very capable. We are the blind leading the blind.

My involvement with the blind movement inspired me to get involved on campus with politics for students with and without disabilities. I want political skills so that I can advocate for myself and others who need their voices to be heard.

This summer I was thrilled to have the chance to attend an international convention of blind people, hosted by the U.S. National Federation of the Blind in Dallas, Texas. Meeting independent, successful, blind delegates from around the world was an emotional and empowering experience for me.

The tapping of thousands of canes together was a sound so beautiful I will never forget it.

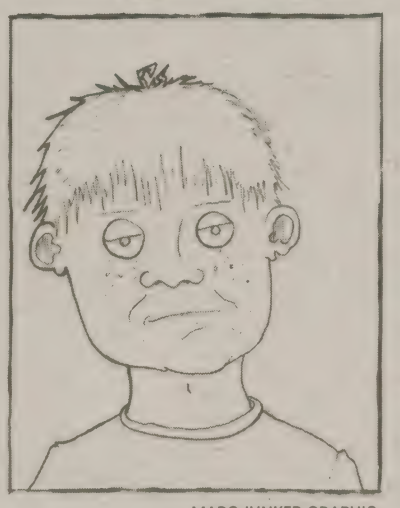
I graduate from UVic this spring and will begin to take the first steps towards building my own career. Based on misconceptions about our competence and abilities, blind people face an unemployment rate of over 70 per cent, regardless of educational attainments.

When they do gain employment, blind people are lawyers, accountants, business people and teachers, and are active in a full-range of other occupations.

I plan to overcome the odds, and I hope that someday blind people, when they show up in movies, will be like me.

Let's all hug a ginger kid

Athena Noonan



MARC JUNKER GRAPHIC

It is no secret that I have a thing for flaming red hair.

Whether a dark shade of copper or a vibrant orangey hue, my attention is inevitably drawn to heads covered in locks of red.

How can I help myself? In a sea of brunettes and blonds, a splash of color sparkling like a ruby in the rough is a refreshing sight. Not to mention that I'm dating a guy who sprouts facial hair that rivals Captain Redbeard's. And other friends of mine grow manes that would make Lindsay Lohan jealous.

So one can only imagine the horror I felt when I heard about the Facebook group "National Kick a Ginger Day."

Well, maybe not horror. OK. I admit that I laughed when I first heard about kicking gingers on the radio. I thought it was just a joke. I'm sure the 14-year-old group administrator, possibly facing hate crime charges, thought it was a joke too.

But when I learned that young Canadian redheads actually found themselves at the toe end of their classmate's shoes last Thursday, it didn't seem as funny. One red-haired Albertan student said that upon arriving at school, she and her 13-year-old sister were punched and kicked.

In Sooke, 20 students were suspended for anti-ginger behaviour at Journey Middle School. Thirteen-year-old Aaron Mishkin of Nanaimo told the Vancouver Sun that he figured he was kicked or hit about 80 times throughout the day.

Eighty times?

I'm surprised the kid escaped without serious injuries. And to add to the irony, this violence broke out in the middle of international Bullying Awareness week.

But maybe media did blow it a little out of proportion. Yes, the Facebook group had close to 5,000 members from around the globe, but only a handful of schools across Canada reported violence, and no one was seriously hurt — physically at least.

Though "Kick and Ginger Day" may not have been the great nationwide phenomena that many news reports claimed it to be, it shouldn't be dismissed as a joke or a typical act of bullying.

Yes, kids will be kids and tease each other for anything that is different, but that doesn't make it right. So why did the ginger-kickers believe it was acceptable to cover their peers with bruises because of the colour of their hair?

Some, especially the news media, are saying that *South Park* triggered the hostility. I've read news stories going so far as saying the show directly encouraged the event to take place on Nov. 20.

The episode of *South Park* in question, titled "Ginger Kids," involves the character Eric Cartman campaigning against evil, soulless redheads. Not once is "Kick a Ginger Day" mentioned. It seems clear that the show is satirizing the absurdity of racism, not promoting it.

Others blame Facebook, and still more point the finger at bad parenting. In my opinion, it was jealousy.

Yes, gingers have suffered throughout history. According to a BBC news article, ancient Egyptians sacrificed redheads, and medieval Europeans believed red hair was a sign of witchcraft and devilry.

Yet an insatiable fascination with red hair has persisted as well. Redheaded women were a favourite subject of the painters Titian and Boticelli. Two University of Rochester psychologists demonstrated that the colour red increases a woman's attractiveness — the colour increases heart rate, excitement and arousal.

Women with cherry tresses are often viewed as more sexually adventurous and alluring to men. And what about Queen Elizabeth, Winston Churchill, Christopher Columbus and Lucille Ball? They were all gingers.

Who wouldn't want to be a ginger? They are among the rarest breed, making up just two to six per cent of the population. Gingers should be prized for their rarity. Or hugged, at least. That's what Facebook group "Hug a Ginger Day" said in response to Kick a Ginger Day.

In fact, a horde of groups have emerged, including "Red haired people against national kick a ginger day" and "Kick a person who kicked a ginger on kick a ginger day, day."

Obviously, TV and Facebook are influential. Facebook has 120 million active users, and is the fourth most trafficked site in the world.

Ultimately, responsibility comes down to us. I can only hope that people realize that kicking gingers for their hair or skin colour is wrong, and that they learn to embrace "gingervitis."

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Green gifts galore

Have an environmentally-friendly holiday

Words by Kat Eschner
Illustrations by Jennifer Zhou

'Tis the season to be costly. But the holidays aren't just heavy on the wallet — they're hard on the planet too.

According to Stats Canada, in 2005, consumer dollars spent on giftware, novelty items and souvenirs alone went up 280 per cent over December, from $4.6 million to a whopping $17.6 million. That's a lot of ballerina statues for Grandma, plastic bobblehead dolls for the car dashboard and talking picture frames. That's also a lot of plastic, a lot of fossil-fuel-consuming goods and a lot of space in the landfill.

Gifts are lovely to get and fun to give, but as our friend the Grinch pondered, maybe Christmas, in fact, doesn't come from a store.

What with the short days and long nights, the exams and stress, the getting up while it's still dark out and coming home in the black of night, winter celebrations remind us that there is warmth, light and company amidst all the chilly darkness.

Gifts don't have to be big or fancy, and most don't even have to be material to be meaningful. They do have to be thoughtful. Consider what the people on your list could actually use, and help them get it in an environmentally-friendly way.

If you're going the organic, fair trade or local route, things often cost more. Don't take that as a sign that you should trod the cheaper, less sustainable path: take it as a sign you should buy more carefully. This merry little season, do the earth, yourself and your loved ones a favour by dreaming up a green Christmas.

Buy local, and ethical

Instead of shopping at the mall, check out a few local businesses like the ones mentioned here. They often offer student discounts and carry hard-to-find objects.

Supply your loved ones with local products, and try to make them useful. Coffee, soap, food: the beauty of these presents is that they'll disappear after being enjoyed, and not take up space in basements or landfills.

And if you're going to a group gathering for the holidays, consider bringing some organic chow with you — it's a quick way to become instant friends with anyone you don't already know.

Wildfire Bakery (1517 Quadra St.) concocts levain breads and baked goods in a brick oven, using organic, mostly B.C. ingredients (their wheat is from Vancouver Island). Besides their regular stock, which ranges from an apricot-anise loaf to a beautifully presented vegan chocolate cake, they started baking their Christmas menu on Dec 1.

Mincemeat tarts ($2.75 ea) or chocolate-dipped shortbread Christmas trees ($1.25) probably wouldn't travel well or last very long if left under a tree, but they can make great last-minute gifts.

If you're on the market for a larger contribution to a group celebration, Wildfire makes yule logs and white chocolate dome cakes (both $26.50), as well as mincemeat and pumpkin pies (both $16) and stollen, a German Christmas bread.

For someone who spends hours in the shower, soap could be a great gift. But unless you've known your giftee since the third grade, it's probably not a good idea to pick a soap scent you're not certain they like.

Pacific Coast Soapworks (#102 - 560 Johnson St.) has preservative-free merchandise, which is entirely vegan except for the honey in their oatmeal-honey bar ($6.50). Handmade in Saanich with many local ingredients, their products range from shampoo bars ($7.50) to clay complexion bars and shave soaps (both $6.50). They also make edible body butter with coconut, great for special someones.

Pacific Coast also makes Christmas crackers containing five sample soaps ($10), good for the undecided. They have a $3-off deal when you buy six soaps, so consider teaming up with a friend if you only want a few bars.

Salt Spring Soapworks (575 Johnson St.) might not be as local as Pacific Coast, but Salt Spring's handmade merchandise still comes from regions nearby. Besides their regular soaps, Salt Spring releases a Christmas line including cinnamon and peppermint soaps (four for $23), and cranberry body gelato ($12.95 each).

If you're on the market for a walk-in, walk-out gift-buying experience, take advantage of their free holiday gift-wrapping and leave the store with packaged presents, ready for giving.

Buy treats, not the whole meal deal

As students, we don't always have spare dollars for small luxuries. Give friends the ability to indulge in tiny treats they never get for themselves.

Most of us love our morning caffeine. Help improve giftees' everyday habits by buying fair trade, organic versions of the coffee roast or tea blend they already drink.

Plenty Epicurean Pantry (1034 Fort St.) carries Shawnigan Lake's Mozino Coffee (about $14) and many teas too. Plenty really is devoted to tasteful sensuous enjoyment — you'll find everything from bright-coloured Bambu bamboo baskets ($5-$12) to locally made cheeses. There's something for any epicure on your list. They also offer a 10 per cent student discount. While you're there, check out their bulk tea sale, and have a sample from the teapot that's always on.

Hemp & Co. (547 Johnson St.) specializes in unique wares. Students can always use more socks and underwear: they mean more time in between loads of laundry. Your grandmother may have given you underwear for Christmas when you were a little kid, but was it eco-friendly? Get it cute, get it cool, get it made with organic and sustainable fibres.

Hemp & Co. has bamboo socks ($9.00 for two pairs), hemp socks ($17) and women's underwear ($10-$25). Though the store stocks a wide selection of hemp and organic cotton clothing, they also

carry smaller items that might better fit the student gift budget. Their 15 per cent student discount also helps. The store has a large selection of hemp jewelry and can even custom-make a piece for $15-20. They also carry biodegradable cutlery ($5) and plastic bags made by local business AK Green Initiatives.

Don't underestimate handmade things

There's always an opportunity to get creative with presents, if that's your thing. Don't be afraid to pick up your paintbrush or knitting needles and create something unique. This is an especially good option for family members, who usually just appreciate a reminder that their student exists somewhere under all those books. If you have a friend who admires something you've made for yourself, make them one too.

Baking is another great option. Buy ingredients as organic and local as possible, and then spend an afternoon in the kitchen. If there's someone on your list with specific dietary needs, you can hand-make something they'll be able to eat.

Optionally, give a crafty friend or acquaintance your business. Pay them in cash or trade them for Christmas gifts — it's a win-win situation.

Get creative about packaging

For those on a time schedule, and for the artistically challenged, a little creativity still makes gift-giving simpler and sometimes cheaper. If you're looking to stretch your budget, invest in bulk deals or redistribute larger items in attractive packaging.

For Good Measure (3831 Cadboro Bay Rd.) has a 10 per cent student discount. They stock Richmond-made Canterbury Coffee and several box teas, but their main attraction is a large number of bulk organic and fair-trade goods. For weekly specials, sign up for their e-newsletter at mercurymarket.ca.

Bulk foods might seem like an odd gift, but they definitely offer an opportunity for creativity: if repackaged in vintage tins or cloth bulk food bags, organic pastas or trail mix takes on a whole new appeal. For those who plan on baking Christmas gifts, bulk foods are a great way to go for supplies.

The Good Planet Company (764 Fort St.) is a good spot for things from little bamboo sporks ($3) to wind-up radios and flashlights ($20-$100). You can give hemp bulk bags and produce bags in a variety of sizes ($5.99-$7.99) and the Graphic series Enviro-sacs ($8), spacious cloth bags that fold up to about the size of a pill bottle.

For those who pack lunches, try stainless steel snap-top food containers, in sizes similar to round plastic lunch containers ($18-25). Why not fill one with organic snacks? Voila, a seasonal present.

Go second-hand

Some things just get better with age. Used clothes mean no new materials, and they can also mean cheaper prices.

The Patch (719 Yates St.) is the place to go if you're looking for that perfect garment or accessory. Consider hitting up this store and other secondhand places for gifts just right for that vintage-lover in your family, or someone who's been looking for a long-lost favourite t-shirt.

Victoria also has an amazing selection of used bookstores. If you have a friend who likes reading, they'll probably enjoy looking through a secondhand bookstore as much as they enjoy receiving an actual book: double their happiness by getting them a gift certificate.

Russell Books (734 Fort St.) is a good place to start. Russell can keep any bibliophile happy for days, carrying new, used and out-of-print books. While you're there, be sure to grab a beige "Bookstores of Vancouver Island" pamphlet (available at the till) to tuck in with your gift. Russell gift certificates can also be used at Books on View.

Russell also has a selection of Canadian-made Christmas cards, and tree-free cards made from sugarcane. There's nothing wrong with giving cards instead of larger presents. The handwritten word is sadly becoming something of a lost art in the digital age — help revive it by adding handmade cards to your giving list.

Help friends and family become greener

Changing over to more planet-friendly practices can be difficult. Help the people on your gift list change their ways.

Spud.ca is a Vancouver-based online local and organic food delivery company active throughout B.C. and parts of the U.S. This service is more eco-friendly not only because of its food, but because one delivery truck uses less fuel than multiple cars would use going to the supermarket — and warehouses take up less space than grocery stores and parking lots.

A Spud account would make a great gift if you have an aging relative who knows how to use a computer. They can place an order and have it delivered to them in a matter of days.

The Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre (1216 North Park St.) is the perfect place for people who aspire to food greenness. Why not help those in your life ensure their leftovers don't end in a landfill? The centre holds their annual Christmas sale on Dec. 13, although they're closed the rest of December.

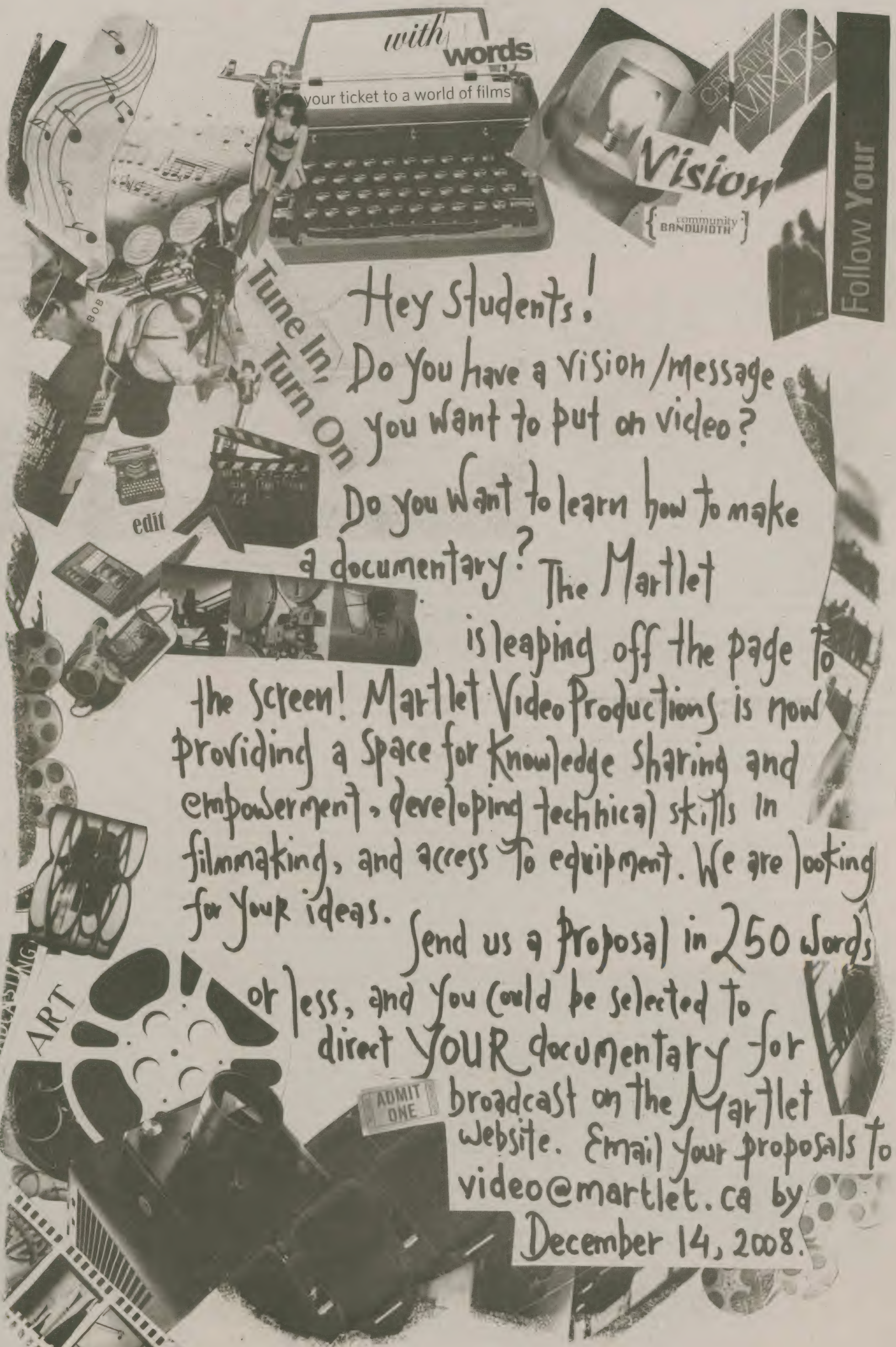
Pick up a small-scale indoor worm composter ($34.16). It comes with everything your composting amigo will need, except for the red wriggler worms required to make compost (about an extra $20.00).

For hardcore composters, try a compost centre membership. At a student price of $20 or a general public price of $25, the membership comes with two free workshops (normally $15 each) and a 10 per cent discount in garden centres around Victoria.

In Bloom Floral (#410-3147 Douglas St.) is a wish come true for those who like plants but lack a garden. This florist supplies their blooms from local growers if possible. Not only does it package them using biodegradable cellophane, it composts old stock as well. They offer locally-grown poinsettias, 6-inches ($4.50) to 10-inches ($40).

Be sure to refer your giftee to the In Bloom website (www.inbloomfloralboutique.ca). The site has an extensive plant care guide, which will help those flowers stay alive longer.

Plants make great early dorm gifts, and living decorations are always good for the air — one of the many perks to going green for those you love this season.



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WHAT'S IN YOUR MOUTH?

Tasty holiday treats to tantalize the tastebuds

Gemma Karstens-Smith

The holiday season has arrived. Not only is it a time to get together and entertain friends and family, but also to enjoy our favorite foods — from turkey, stuffing and cranberry sauce, to ciders and mounds of baking. One thing's for sure: there's no better time to treat yourself to some tasty homemade treats than after you've been working so hard on final papers and exams.

A cake recipe is a great addition to any potluck or cocktail party. It's also a fantastic way to impress the parents.— proving cereal and pasta aren't the only foods you've learned to make in your time at university.

For a cake with some extra holiday flavor, try a few variations. Instead of a regular butter icing, use peppermint. Decorating with candy canes or Santa-shaped chocolates can also add some festive flair.

For more laid-back holiday get-togethers — or a study snack — here's a recipe for gingerbread cookies.

These ones are perfect for an afternoon of present swapping and cookie decorating with friends.

Enjoy.

GEMMA KARSTENS-SMITH PHOTO

Chocolate cake's great any time of year, but adding peppermint icing and candy canes gives festive flair.

CHOCOLATE CAKE

The cake

435 ml (1 3/4 cup) flour
435 ml (1 3/4 cup) sugar
185 ml (3/4 cup) cocoa
7 ml (1 1/2 tsp) baking powder
7 ml (1 1/2 tsp) baking soda
2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) salt
250 ml (1 cup) milk
125 ml (1/2 cup) canola oil
2 large eggs
10 ml (2 tsp) vanilla extract
250 ml (1 cup) boiling water

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Grease two 9-inch cake pans, or one lasagna-sized pan.

Mix the flour, sugar, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda and salt in a large bowl. Make sure to break up any lumps in the cocoa. Add the milk, oil, eggs and vanilla, using an electric mixer to beat it smooth. Stir in the water (don't worry, the batter will be thin). Pour the batter into the pans.

Bake for 30-35 minutes, until the top is springy to the touch. Make sure the layers are completely cool before frosting them.

Peppermint icing

60-125 ml (1/4-1/2 cup) softened butter or margarine
1 L (4 cups) icing sugar (you may need a little extra)
60 ml (1/4 cup) milk (you may need a little extra)
5-10 ml (1-2 tsp) peppermint extract

In a large bowl, beat the butter with an electric mixer until creamy. Add the icing sugar, milk and vanilla gradually, beating it until the mixture is well blended and creamy. Add small amounts of sugar or milk if necessary to achieve a spreadable frosting.

GINGERBREAD COOKIES

60 ml (1/2 cup) vegetable shortening
60 ml (1/2 cup) sugar
1 egg
60 ml (1/2 cup) blackstrap molasses
5 ml (1 tsp) vanilla extract
30 ml (1/4 cup) fresh ginger, grated
750 ml (3 cups) flour
5 ml (1 tsp) cinnamon
7.5 ml (3/4 tsp) baking soda
2 ml (1/4 tsp) ground cloves

Preheat oven to 375 F. Cream the sugar and shortening together until fluffy. Beat in the egg and vanilla. Add the molasses and ginger, stirring until the mixture is evenly blended. Mix the remaining ingredients in a separate bowl. Combine the two mixtures, stirring until the dough comes together. Refrigerate for at least two hours before rolling.

Roll out the dough to 1/8 inch thickness on a lightly floured surface. Cut into shapes of your choice. Bake on a parchment-lined cookie sheet for 6-8 minutes, or until edges are firm.

Decorate as desired.

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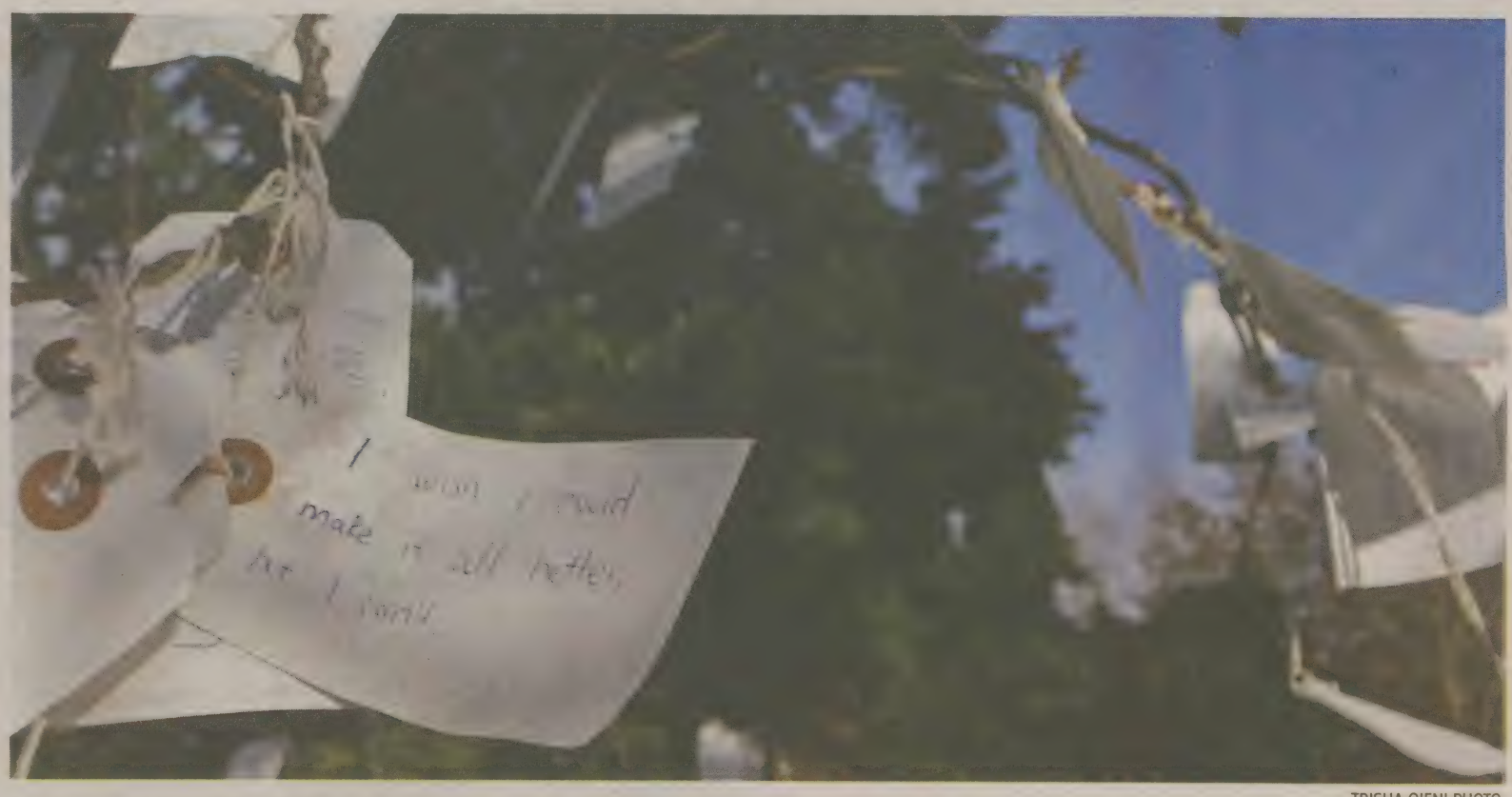
Wish tree mixes magic, community and art

Kailey Willetts



TRISHA GIENI PHOTO

People throughout the campus community wrote down their wishes and tied them to a wish tree as part of Marcela Trejo's art project.

Trees around UVic may have lost their autumn leaves, but one particular tree on campus has gained something special — wishes.

The wish tree, located between the fine arts building and the Phoenix theatre, is an art piece created by third-year visual arts student Marcela Trejo. Trejo's campus version, called "Wish Piece," is a replica of a project originally created by artist Yoko Ono.

Trejo attached instructions to the tree, encouraging the public to participate in the piece by making a wish. She also provided a box with slips of paper, pens and string. The rest was left up to participants.

"I didn't think that many people would participate," said Trejo. "[Participation] was better than what I was expecting."

In fact, the community responded so strongly that every accessible branch was covered with wishes, giving the barren tree new life.

"I chose the wish tree because I just thought it was a simple piece, but with a big meaning," said Trejo, who created the tree for as a project for her Curatorial Directions class.

The wish tree is part of the "Do it" exhibit that began in 1994 as a response to gallery institutions and the percieved consumerism in earlier arts scenes. The exhibit broke down the barrier between audience and art, allowing viewers for the first time to become part of the pieces. "Do it" exhibitions are created by museums and galleries selecting from 30 potential acts or works. The work then has to be realized by the gallery putting it on through the instructions written by the original artist, but the original artist is to have no involvement.

Each time the artist's instructions are carried out, there is a new result, each specific to the location. This wish tree, for example, included student specific wishes, like good exam results, which are likely different than the wishes on the original tree in New York.

Ono's instructions for the wish tree were simple: "Make a wish. Write it down on a piece of paper. Fold it and tie it around the branch of a Wish Tree. Ask your friends to do the same. Keep wishing until the branches are covered with wishes."

"Yoko Ono's motivation was creating an act of global solidarity in the quest for world peace," said Trejo. "I like the idea of hoping for peace in life."

Trejo said Ono had created wish trees all over the world, and is putting the wishes in capsules to light up a tower of peace she has created in Iceland.

Other pieces put on by students in Curatorial Directions class included "Homage to Each Red Thing" created by Alison Knowles, where the reproducer is instructed to place nonspecific red objects onto a grid on the floor, and "False Right, Right False?" created by Erwin Wurm, where participants had to climb into a box and hold its lid up with their legs, then have a polaroid picture taken.

The wish tree was taken down on Monday, Dec. 1, but at that point Trejo hadn't decided what she was going to do with the wishes. Although, she admitted, she is probably going to read them.

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Christmas movies: the good, the bad and the ugly

Karlene Nicolajsen

There's nothing like a good Christmas movie to get you into the holiday spirit. And then there's the ones that just send you over the eggnog edge.

The most intolerable Christmas movies always seem to be about the escalation of a family or neighbourhood conflict, where everybody starts acting petty about things — lights on houses, stars on trees — and everyone gets angry. There's usually some no-laugh slapstick comedy routine, with nobody coming out on top. Then they realize, in some tender little moment, the season is about love and generosity, and that ol' Christmas spirit takes over everything. Yeah. Intolerable.

The Naughty List

Take for instance *Deck the Halls*. Imagine the typical formula, only this time it's shot in Surrey, starring Danny Devito and Matthew Broderick. Ask yourself if you want to watch that. And watch out: *Surviving Christmas*, with Ben Affleck fits the same mould, as does 2004's *Christmas with the Kranks*. Tim Allen plays Mr. Krank, who tries to escape Christmas. Of course, in the end he changes his mind, but the journey there is just your typical holiday movie.

Kranks wasn't Allen's first experience with Yuletide flicks. Before he tried to skip Christmas, he turned into Santa in the 1994 film, *The Santa Clause*, which led to trying to find Santa a wife in *The Santa Clause 2* (2002) and then trying to save Christmas from Jack Frost in 2006's *The Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause*. At some point, Allen's going to have to step away from making crappy holiday flicks.

Cheesy holiday movies aren't just limited to live action either. Just because *The Polar Express* grossed about $303 million between its release in 2004 and last December, doesn't mean that it's a shoo-in to be a Christmas favourite.

Any film where Tom Hanks (animated through performance-capture technology) plays five different characters is bound to have problems. Perhaps the biggest issue is that nobody's eyes move — ever. That, and the fact that kids take a train to the North Pole to meet Santa, though no one can see him or hear his bell if they don't truly believe. Believing is at the crux of Christmas spirit, after all.

Not that there's anything wrong with spirit, and not that we don't want these films to fill us with good cheer.

The Nice List

Take Ron Howard's *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (2000), for instance. It has all of the previous criticisms of holiday films — neighbourly competitiveness, the skepticism of children and the ultimate triumph of the "True Meaning of Christmas." The Grinch even attempts to literally steal Christmas out from under the turned-up noses of the Whos. But it isn't the bitter attitude of an anti-Santa that sells this film (if it was, *Bad Santa* would fit into the good category), or its inevitable moral lesson. It's because, as children, we were also fond of Dr. Seuss, and his rhymes and alternate worlds are capable of charming even the adult mind.

In the same vein, Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (1993) does the trick. Jack Skellington and the residents of Halloween Town decide to take over Christmas one year. They do their best, but no one really appreciates the beheaded dolls or snakes they find under the tree from yet another anti-Santa character. In the end, the ghouls shrug it off and content themselves with being really good at Halloween. Delightful.

Chris Columbus' *Home Alone* (1990) and *Home Alone 2: Lost in New York* (1992) are a couple more great holiday picks. Kevin McCallister (Macaulay Culkin) wishes away his rather cumbersome family over the Christmas break, and has a grand old time while foiling the plans of two small-time bandits.

If you want something more potent than feel-good family films, there's always John McTiernan's *Die Hard* (1988). Yes, *Die Hard* is a Christmas movie, as is *Die Hard 2* (1990). Both come down to Bruce Willis in a filthy undershirt, shooting terrorists while attempting to spend the holiday with his on-again off-again wife and their children.

There's also Richard Donner's *Scrooged* (1988), starring Bill Murray as a rich cynical executive who gets visits from all those ghosts-of-Christmas-something.

Perhaps the best of all Christmas movies is Bob Clark's *A Christmas Story* (1983). You know, the one with the kid in the bottle glasses. Its tagline, "A Tribute to the Original, Traditional, One-Hundred-Percent, Red-Blooded, Two-Fisted, All-American Christmas," rings true to form.

Initially unpopular after its release, the film now runs as a television holiday special on any given network. All Ralphie wants is a Red Ryder BB gun, but everyone — his mother, his teacher, the Santa at the mall — says "you'll shoot your eye out, kid." Spoiler alert! He does get his gun, and yeah, he does shoot his eye out. Classic.

JENNIFER ZHOU GRAPHIC

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Art show 'Gifted' doubles as unique holiday market

What: "Gifted"
Where: Deluge Contemporary Art (636 Yates St.)
When: Now until Dec. 19

Katherine Walkiewicz

For those looking for that uniquly different gift but unsure where to find it this holiday, an art show may just be what the season ordered. "Gifted," at Deluge Contemporary Art, is a sprawling show exhibiting a selection of pieces from over 20 artists — making your shopping this year all the easier.

"Obviously it's a seasonal show, [but] it has more to do with the range of artists invited, rather than a more formal curatorial direction," said Daniel Laskarin, a UVic faculty member who also has a piece, "Persistent Object," in the exhibit.

The pieces in the show may seem to lack thematic cohesiveness, but the range of media and subject matter makes for an interesting browsing experience, and just in time for the holidays. "Untitled" by Cody Haight is a small mosiac of patiently-cut antiquarian book covers that resembles a quilt. Each piece is tinier than a fingernail, and the pattern and colours connote a sense of warmth, family and nostalgia. Forgoing a real quilt in favour of an investment in a piece like this could make for an interesting postmodern heirloom.

Some of the most esthetically pleasing pieces in the show are "Fringe," "Gathers," "Appliqué" and "Bouclé" by Megan Dickie. To unwrap one of these sculptures on Christmas morning would be to open a gorgeous keepsake.

Dickie's abstract pieces are encased in small transparent boxes, protected from dust and the grasping hands of toddlers. Coils and folds of austere grey wax hide glimpses of fruity colours. The layers, crevices, and wax buttons are a delight to gaze it, acting as veritable eye candy. If you are planning to propose to your significant other over the holidays, why not forgo the traditional ring in favour of one of these sculptures instead?

Karina Kalvaitis's illustrations of whales and elephants certainly do express a "new, less cynical seasonal language," as the curatorial statement of the show asserts. These normally large, imposing animals look as if they have just rolled up onto shore. You could also pick out the perfect gift for your best friend — one of Marlaina Buch's "Tiny Pianos." These miniature cardboard pianos are rigged to actually produce sound. When a circuit is completed by dragging a wire over the "keyboard," the piano produces a charming electronic din. Perhaps the most consumer-minded pieces of the show, there are seven to choose from, and they each cost $20.

Chris Gillespie's moth sketches, enclosed in small plastic bags, imbue a sense of presentation and gift-giving that seems particularly suited to this show. They are fragile, faint and sensitively rendered. They were drawn in silverpoint, a method of drawing in which a piece of silver is used to create the delicate colour. Another notable piece is a series of drawings by Caleb Speller. His drawings indicate an enviable sense of balance between sophistication and whimsy.

Laskarin's sculptural piece exemplifies where the show could have gone, had more restraint and discrimination been exercised in the curatorial process. The show purports to present examinations of "idiosyncratic senses of illumination, transcendence and desire" in the vein of the seasonal language.

While the majority of pieces in the show don't seem to address this holiday tone, Laskarin's does. His sculpture is like slowly unwrapping a present, leaving one time to meditate on its implications.

That said, "Gifted" is a great place to get accquainted with the work of some Victoria artists, as well as a handful from beyond the Island. There are paintings, sculptures, drawings, collages and some endearingly cute stuffed animals from local artist Vena Cava. The mixture of pieces is sure to appeal to a wide variety of tastes.

UVic grad's first book creates a rip-roarin' stampede

Sam VanSchie

Twenty-two years ago, Mark Leiren-Young was a new grad out of UVic's theatre and creative writing departments and was desperate enough for work that he accepted a job as a reporter at the Williams Lake Tribune.

Leiren-Young, a city slicker in a small town, found trouble from the moment he entered Williams Lake, B.C. Arriving in the wee hours of the morning, he stopped to refuel his car and saw an armed robbery at the gas station. Though the population is only 10,000 people, this small logging town has the highest crime rate in the province. This gas station robbery would become the first of many crime stories he'd write.

Leiren-Young's first book *Never Shoot a Stampede Queen* is about his year writing for the Tribune. He tells the stories behind the articles he wrote for the newspaper and allows the book to become something of a guide to why journalists have so much fun.

"Every reporter says they're going to write a book like this, but nobody ever does," said Leiren-Young, flashing his constant smile, his thinning long hair swaying as he talks.

He admits that, in interviews, he's more comfortable asking the questions than answering them. But this isn't the first time he's promoted himself. In the years since the Tribune, Leiren-Young has written plays, performed in a comedy duo and wrote and directed the movie *The Green Chain*, all while freelance writing for newspapers.

He says there are strong reasons for time-warping back to his formative years for *Stampede Queen*.

"I showed the manuscript to a friend and he told me, 'You have to publish it or you're stupid,'" Leiren-Young explained.

He originally wrote the collection of stories in 1988, but had no success publishing it. With the critical distance 20 years brings, he was able to re-order and make slight revisions to the stories to make them flow as a book.

"I had to think of it not as a memoir, but as a story of a crazy town," said Leiren-Young. "Just writing about me would have been to self-indulgent."

The process of updating the stories threw Leiren-Young back to Williams Lake where some of the book's characters still live (to protect their identity, the names in the book were changed). He re-read all his old articles and leafed though many of his old notepads, which he'd stored in boxes.

"The research was, in a sense, easy, because this job creates such a paper trail — literally," he said.

Leiren-Young admits that some of the articles weren't as great as he remembered them.

"I know I thought they were just the best at the time. That's the thing about being a journalist — you really have to think you're a god when you're doing it, or you'd never last on the job," he said. "I remember times when I was 1,000 per cent sure I'd change the world through my writing."

It's clear that Leiren-Young has no respect for authority. Part of this is just his nature, he says, but he got away with it at the Tribune because he never intended to stay, so he wasn't looking to make friends.

"Every paper should hire somebody to come in for a year and get what nobody else wants to," he said. "You see the city with new eyes, and notice stuff that everybody else is used to."

PROVIDED PHOTO
Mark Leiren-Young found a niche.

And while the town may have been glad to see him go, when the book hit stores in September, it was one of the most popular in William's Lake. They sell it there as a supermarket book, next to the soft-cover Stephen King bestsellers.

"Everybody [in Williams Lake] has either read it or knows somebody who has read it," Leiren-Young said.

He laughs about some of the phone calls he's received from people who recognized themselves in the book.

"They've been so excited and supportive — it's just amazing," he said. "I thought they'd hate it."

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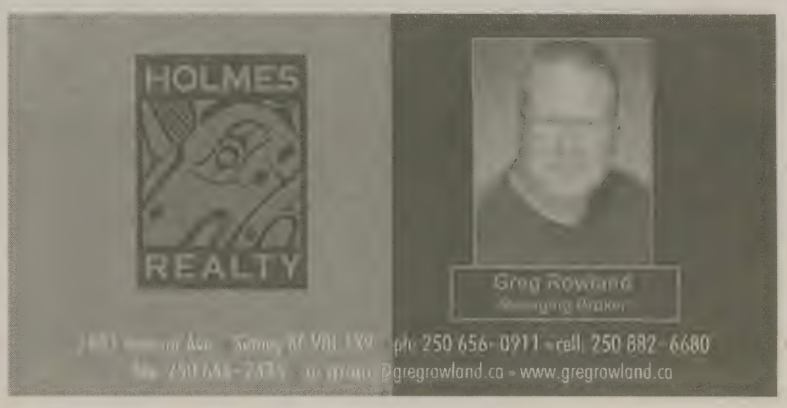

UVic ready to upset James Bay in VIRU Barnard Cup

Andrew Smith

It all comes down to one match.

On Saturday, Dec. 5, James Bay will host bitter rivals the Vikes in the Barnard Cup final to determine the Vancouver Island Rugby Union 2008 (VIRU) regular season champions.

Despite the Vikes having five players returning from a Team Canada tour and boasting the best defensive record with just 83 points scored against them in eight games, the young side will be the underdog heading into this weekend's battle with a 5-3 record.

Barnard Cup opponents James Bay have proved their dominance once again over the VIRU after finishing with a perfect 8-0 record. Their composure and consistency has seen the team generate the strongest offence in the league as they finished week 10 with 209 points.

Under the steady hand of a disciplined backline and ruthless forward pack, James Bay are the favorites heading into this weekend's final. The oldest rugby club in Canada has the home field advantage as they set out to claim their second consecutive Barnard Cup.

During the '08 VIRU regular season, James Bay was able to defeat the Vikes in both meetings. Their 20-17 win two weeks ago at Wallace Field was far less convincing than their Nov. 1 victory on their home pitch where they dominated a flustered UVic side by a score of 20-6.

The Bays' side will look to their forward pack's size to control the match tempo. If the home side can squander the Vikes' distribution to their crafty back line runners, their forwards should be able to maintain their dominance at the break down and set plays.

With fly half Jeff Williams in top form, James Bay has a steady kicker and tactical distributor at the helm. Add the dangerous try-scoring abilities of Phil Mack to their line up and the reigning champions will be a difficult side to beat on their home pitch.

The win is far from being in the bag, however, as UVic is set to field it's strongest side in over 10 years in Barnard Cup history. For the first time in recent years, the Vikes will have every starter at their disposal, with the exception of hooker Pat Riordan.

UVic's flanks will be well armed with the relentless tackling duo Neil Meechan and Adam Kleeberger. The two players have recently been capped with the Canadian National Men's Sevens team in the Bahamas before Kleeberger went on the four-week November tour of Europe. If anyone's going to minimize James Bay's forward play it will be these two players.

With the possibility of UVic's two top kickers returning, the Vikes' issues of goal kicking and defensive relief could be solved. Captain David Spicer's boot and Nathan Hirayama's place kicking have been sorely missed by a side that lost matches this season by failed attempts at the goal.

With a better kicker, the Vikes could have won week 10's match after missing two conversions and losing the match by a mere three points.

With UVic's Gordie Sawers' 30 points this season and rookie Kyle Buckley consistently adding to the score line, the Vikes coaching staff now face the difficult task of selecting their line up for Saturday's match. The depth of their squad and fresh legs off the bench may just be the deciding factor as they look to claim their first Barnard Cup since 2006.

ANDREW SMITH PHOTO

James Bay (centre) has posted an impressive 209 points this season.

UVic coach Doug Tate says that everything comes down to the 80 minutes of play and how his players can perform at MacDonald Park.

"It all comes down to one game," Tate says. "I like our chances."

Kickoff is set for 2:30 p.m. at MacDonald Park.

Optimism running high in Vancouver despite loss of Luongo

Steve Lancashire

With over a quarter of the regular season NHL games played, optimism surrounds the Vancouver Canucks.

Coming off a summer that witnessed a complete change in the culture of the team, the Canucks exploded out of the gate posting a 6-0-1 pre-season record. The team continued to perform with two wins in an early home series over the Calgary Flames.

But after an October that featured a six-game road trip and mediocre play, the Canucks entered the month of November with a respectable record of 6-5 and a rabid fan-base unsure of the Canucks' consistency.

Despite an early loss to the reigning Stanley Cup champions, the Detroit Red Wings, and a lackluster performance in a two-game series against division rival Calgary Flames, the month of November has seen the Canucks climb to the top of the Northwest division standings for the first time this season with a record of 14-8-2.

But there is more to this team than their impressive numbers indicate.

Over the past few weeks, the Canucks have played with chemistry and a will to win that fans have not seen since West Coast icon Trevor Linden carried his 1994 Canucks to within one victory of a Stanley Cup.

In typical Canucks fashion, the team has suffered through an early rash of injuries to defenseman Kevin Bieksa, Sami Salo and forwards Rick Rypien, Mike Johnson, and prize off-season acquisition Pavol Demitra. The Canucks seemed doomed when their franchise player, goaltender Roberto Luongo, strained a groin muscle and was posted on a week-to-week injury list.

Even without their key players, however, the team has found ways to rally and overcome injuries and a relentless travel schedule that sees the Canucks hopping time zones on a regular basis.

Their recent victories against Minnesota, Pittsburgh and Detroit showed how much their chemistry has developed, as evident by their mobbing of back-up goaltender Curtis Sandford following his first victories in nearly a year.

Assistant captain Willie Mitchell says the side has performed well despite having the star goalie on the sidelines.

"We feel good about what's going on," Mitchell said. "We feel good about everyone and their roles and we feel good about the success Curtis [Sandford] has had and the recognition he's getting now."

It is much too early in the season to pencil them into a playoff spot, but based on their recent play and the eventual return of perennial Vezina candidate Luongo, the Canucks should be able to crack the top eight in the conference.

The real test for the Canucks will be fighting to stay on top of the Northwest division. The Minnesota Wild and Calgary Flames have looked dangerous in recent weeks, and it's never easy to count out the Colorado Avalanche and the Edmonton Oilers who make a habit of late-season dramatics.

If the Canucks want to remain competitive and on top of their division, they'll need to improve on two of the most vital components of any team: the power play and penalty kill.

After 24 games, the Canucks sit at 19th on the power play, and 23rd on the penalty kill. Without significant improvement to these areas, the Canucks will struggle to keep pace with their division rivals.

It also wouldn't hurt their chances if poker star Mats Sundin would get up from the card table and either accept or decline their $20 million offer made last summer.

The potential of the Vancouver Canucks is there, and barring another late season collapse, there is no reason to suggest they can't slide into a playoff spot.

What stands between the Canucks and their goal of making the playoffs are the 14 other Western Conference teams that are vying for their own spot.

JOSH THOMPSON PHOTO

Many feared the implications of losing franchise player Roberto Luongo, but Curtis Sanford has held his own since filling in for his captain.

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   Sundown Morning (Old Life)
2. ISOBEL CAMPBELL & MARK LANEGAN
   Sunday At Devil Dirt (Fontana)
3. OOKPIKK †
   Total Home Job (So Called)
4. YXIMALLOO
   Un-Pop (ESP-Disk)
5. MOUNT EERIE with JULIE DOIRON & FRED SQUIRE
   Lost Wisdom (P.W. Elverum & Sun)
6. AIDS WOLF *
   Cities of Glass (Skin Graft)
7. PAST LIVES
   Strange Symmetry EP (Suicide Squeeze)
8. NAIL SALON †
   Rad City [7-Eleven] (Self-Released)
9. AMADOU & MARIAM
   Welcome To Mali (Because/Warner)
10. MAVIS STAPLES
    Live: Hope At The Hideout (Anti-)

* Canadian artist † local artist

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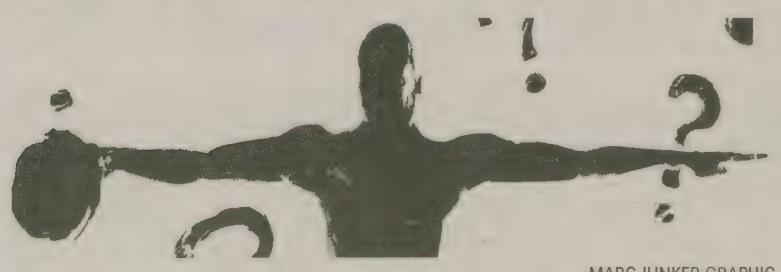
LUNDY'S RUNDOWN



MARC JUNKER GRAPHIC

Time for Lebron to shut up

Matt Lundy

Lebron James needs to be quiet about his basketball future.

Eighteen months from now, the NBA will undergo a drastic transformation when many of its biggest superstars become free agents. Among those up for signing include James, the Toronto Raptors' Chris Bosh, and the Phoenix Suns' Steve Nash. Both the New York Knicks and Detroit Pistons have already cleared significant financial room in an attempt to land the Rock of Gibraltar upon which to build a dominant franchise.

So on Nov. 25, when James visited the Knicks (the dysfunctional and historic team which has openly pined for James), the media hurled tons of speculative questions his way in a post-game press conference.

Not only did James entertain their questions, but he provided evidence to suggest a move from his current team. All of which will remind Cleveland residents that their fair city will go back to being, well, Cleveland.

When asked about a possible landing spot, James tried to remain evasive and diplomatic in his response. The only problem? James said the financial battle for his services would not be limited to New York and Brooklyn.

His response was loaded with incriminating error. Last time I checked, Brooklyn didn't have a professional basketball franchise, but I do recall that the New Jersey Nets part-owner Jay-Z and James have a bizarre protégé-student relationship. James' statement only fuels discussion that the Nets will move from the Garden State to Brooklyn under Mr. Beyonce Knowles' direction.

The relationship cultivated between Jay-Z and James becomes a conflict of interest for the NBA; the two men have a close personal relationship which will inevitably interact with their business interests. James wishes to brand himself as a global icon and looks up to Jay-Z as a business mentor. Following the recent tilt with the Knicks, James exchanged pleasantries with Jay-Z, who was dressed as a 21st-century Steve Urkel.

Secondly, James has tried to play the media game in such a way as to include all NBA teams as viable suitors of his basketball prowess. His inclusion of lowlights like Minnesota and Memphis in the Lebron sweepstakes might be a sweet thing to say, but we all know this aspiring global icon will go to a major market. Good luck becoming world-renowned in Charlotte, North Carolina, the home of pro sports apathy and Michael Jordan's collection of women.

Many rumours have indicated that Nike, who signed James to an unprecedented $90 million contract before he had even played a professional basketball game, will increase his endorsement pay if James signs with a team in a major market such as New York or Los Angeles.

Not only that, but Nike unveiled a new Lebron-inspired basketball shoe prior to his recent game in New York, a bright red high-top named, you guessed it, the Big Apple.

Charles Barkley, the rotund loudmouth and NBA commentator, recently said James needs to "shut the hell up" with regards to his playing future. And Chuck's absolutely right.

The fact remains that the free agency signing period doesn't kick off until the summer of 2010. Between now and then two Larry O'Brien Trophies will be handed out, and the Cavaliers brass has assembled the most competitive Cleveland team since Lebron's arrival.

Through Monday the Cavaliers have recorded a 14-3 record, including a perfect 9-0 at their home arena. Much of their success is due to the play of James, but also their free agent pick-up Mo Williams, who provides a solid second-option on the offensive end.

So keep quiet, Lebron. You have a legitimate shot at winning a title in the next two seasons and owe some respect to your hometown fans in Cleveland. And tell Jay-Z to lose the dorky glasses.

BRYN TASSELL PHOTO

UVic's Sarah Logan was well supported by a back line that hammered James Bay 43-5 on Nov. 29.

Vikes jump into second place

Jonathon Wolsey

The dreary weather was a hindrance to both teams on Saturday, Nov. 29, as the UVic women's rugby team travelled to MacDonald Park to face off against James Bay. The Vikes were able to finish the first half of their season on a positive note as they buried James Bay with a convincing 43-5 win.

With the Vancouver Island Rugby Union's (VIRU) Senior Women's second place up for grabs, the game was not to be taken lightly.

With the fresh memory of last week's crushing defeat still sore, James Bay came out more aggressively against a Vikes squad, recovering from the hangover of last week's win.

Despite strong clearance kicking by the Vikes, James Bay held the momentum for the first 15 minutes as they crashed into UVic's defensive line.

The Vikes were first to score however, after a well-placed kick by fly-half Nikki Palle. The shift in play opened the James Bay defence as scrum half Sarah Logan slipped through. Palle converted for the extra two points to make the score 7-0 for UVic.

The moisture played a large factor in the rucks as James Bay were able to slip out loose balls from the rucks and regain possession.

James Bay was able to follow up a penalty with a try thanks to speedy center Leanne Bilous. Bilous created space with her foot work to out run the Vikes' wingers and to go over for the home side's only points in the match.

UVic quickly responded right from the kickoff and shocked James Bay by pushing them back into their own end. The surge paid off as Sarah Logan scored a try just before the half time whistle making it a 12-5 game.

The Vikes opened the second half with more focus as they came off the break with better ruck control. The visitors found their composure with well timed hits and better passing.

UVic's Nikki Palle cheekily chipped the James Bay defensive line before scrum half Sarah Logan proceeded to kick the ball before scoring a try. Palle again succesfully converted pulling away from James Bay, 19-5.

Adding to the scoring, winger Kayla Read was able to score a try, thanks again to the fly half who was able to lure the defence and distribute a clean pass.

By the middle of the second half, UVic substituted a large portion of their line up to give playing time to their young players and kept the tempo high.

UVic refused to let up as Selina McGinnis went over for a try. Substitute Katie Becker added another try to the score line before Randy Hunter kicked a quality conversion to seal a 43-5 UVic win.

UVic coach Brad Skene was satisfied with the win after the match, but says his side still has a lot to learn.

"We were a little bit over-confident from last week," Skene said. However, he commented that the team will head into the Christmas break on a positive note as they look to improve in the spring semester.

The win moved UVic past both James Bay and Cowichan in the standings to take second place in the VIRU Senior Women's League standings with a 4-3 record.

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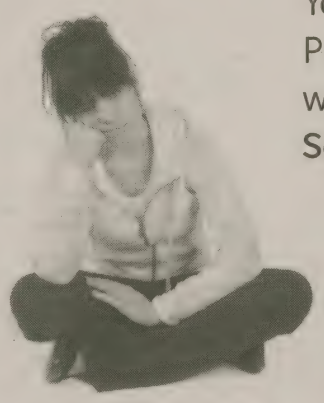

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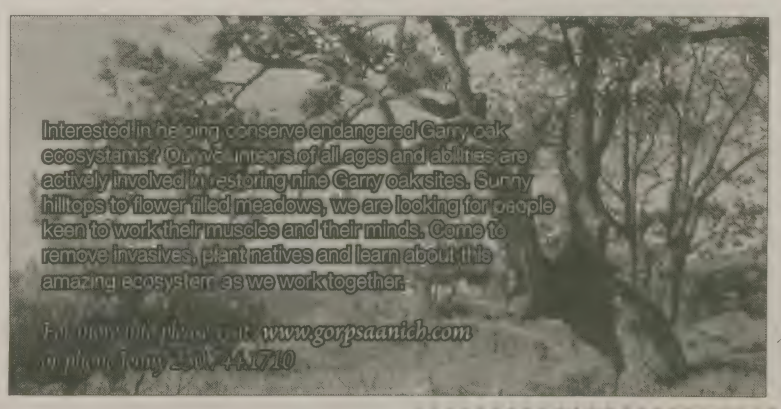
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LIGHTCRAFTERS PHOTOGRAHY

Kayla Dykstra has led the Vikes in scoring in 13 out of 14 games.

Kayla Dykstra: UVic's complete star package

Eric Hertz

The UVic women's basketball team currently sits in ninth place in the Canadian Interuniversity Sports (CIS) division and holds the second-place spot in the Pacific division with a 6-5 record.

Much of their success can be attributed to the stellar play of Kayla Dykstra, the third-year forward hailing from Calgary, Alta. Dykstra has led her team in scoring in 13 out of their 14 games this season. Her 18.27 points per game ranks her fifth in the nation and first in the Pacific division.

The six-foot-two forward has improved her scoring by almost six points per game since last season, and her points come at a very high efficiency.

She leads the CIS in field goal percentage (minimum 40 attempts), at a 59.72 per cent. Dykstra also has a respectable 71.29 per cent throw rate.

She is more to the team than just an efficient scorer, however. The forward pulls down an average of 9.73 rebounds per game — good for ninth in the nation and third in the Pacific. She also ranks seventh in the CIS with 38 offensive boards.

UVic women's basketball coach Brian Cheng says Dykstra adds another dimension to his team with her consistent stats.

"We're going to be tough on defence, but I'm excited about our offence," said Cheng. With a player like Dykstra in his arsenal, Cheng says he can rely on her steady shooting. "Early results have me believing that this may be the best shooting team I've ever coached."

Dykstra has proven herself as a force to be reckoned with by playing strong post defence. She causes turnovers and blocks her opponent off before going in for an easy basket. It's plays like this that show how versatile Dykstra is, and why the Vikes are to be feared come championship time.

The Pacific division playoffs start on Feb. 13, and the Vikes will likely rely on Dykstra to lead them to a berth in the Canada West Final Four as well as the CIS National Championships.

Vikes down UBC Thunderbirds

Gavin Day

VANCOUVER — The UVic women's basketball team came into the University of B.C.'s War Memorial Gymnasium at UBC and overwhelmed a struggling T-Birds team, coming away with a 71-40 win.

The Vikes came out with their guns blazing, building an early 9-0 lead within four minutes of play. The Vikes forced 11 first-quarter turnovers with a strong full-court press. By the end of the first quarter, the visitors had built up an insurmountable lead with a score of 23-4.

The second quarter was a carbon copy of the first. The Vikes forced another 11 turnovers from the T-Birds as Michelle Lee led the way, recording four of her five steals in the second quarter.

There was no let up from the Vikes as they came out of the dressing room for the second half. They continued to dominate all over the court as UBC was unable to build any momentum. UVic took their feet off the gas, scoring only 11 points, but they had another stingy quarter defensively. They held the T-Birds to an astonishing five points in the third quarter to hold a 57-24 lead.

The T-Birds failed to score more than 10 points in two of the first three quarters of the game.

UVic coach Brian Cheng said after the game that strong defence has always been one of his coaching philosophies.

"Our third-year kids have finally developed to a point where we can play the defence we want," said Cheng. "We were always about this kind of defence but it takes time to develop."

With the result all but academic, the Vikes were able to give a number of reserves playing time. Erin Hubenig only saw six minutes of playing time at the end of the game but registered seven points.

Starter Kayla Dykstra only played for 28 minutes but led the way for the Vikes with 20 points and 18 rebounds. Two other Vikes reached double digits in scoring. Last year, the Vikes offence relied heavily on senior Ryan McKay. The win against UBC has shown that a number of players have stepped up to fill the void following McKay's graduation. That's something not lost on Cheng.

"The maturity they've all brought has enabled us to have some early success," he said.

The Vikes head into the break with a 6-5 record. They have won four games in a row, and in those four wins they have limited their opposition to fewer than 50 points.

Men's basketball loses first road game

Gavin Day

VANCOUVER — The UVic men's basketball team lost their first game on the road this season, falling 72-65 to University of B.C. in a game where UBC pulled away in the final minutes.

UVic came in with one of Canada West's lowest scoring averages, and offensive issues which haunted them in the first quarter. The ThunderBirds ran out to a 17-5 lead within the first six minutes of play. UVic missed close-range shots as UBC punished them with points coming from seven different players. UBC led after the first quarter by a score of 22-17.

The second quarter looked less like a basketball game and more like a track meet. The teams traded baskets and the rowdy crowd in attendance at War Memorial Gymnasium were treated to end-to-end, fast-paced basketball. Mitch Gudgeon gave the Vikes their first lead at 30-29, with fewer than four minutes to go after Brandon Dunlop pulled in an offensive rebound.

The Vikes lost their concentration in the final minutes of the half, however, as they relinquished their lead thanks to a number of fast break points by the T-Birds coming off UVic turnovers. Cyril Indome hit a short jumper at the buzzer to bring the score to 36-32 at the half.

Vikes coach Craig Beaucamp felt that his side's lapses in concentration were detrimental to the Vikes in the end.

"We had enough open shots that we needed to hit. There were a couple big plays at certain times where we just didn't get over the hump," Beaucamp said after the game. "We tied it up, we got ahead by one. I thought we had a couple open chances to go ahead and we didn't hit the shots."

UBC started the second half much in the same way they started the first. T-Birds guard Nathan Yu scored with four and a half minutes left before being fouled. He converted the resulting free-throw to give UBC a 47-41 lead. The Vikes refused to let UBC run away with the win, however, as Gudgeon knocked down a number of free-throws and scored with the final shot of the quarter to keep the game close at 56-54.

The game was physically draining for both teams. Just as the Vikes looked as they could put together a run, UBC found a way to respond. Former Vike Josh Whyte scored with four minutes remaining to give the T-Birds a slim 63-61 margin. After Whyte's basket, UBC's tight zone defence kept the Vikes outside of the paint and off the score sheet until the final minute of the game.

Beaucamp was still impressed to see his side hold steady against one of Canada West's top teams.

"I didn't think the first games we played against them were quite as competitive as this one so you're never happy to lose, but I thought we made some progress," Beaucamp said. "I thought we did enough good things to put ourselves in enough good spots offensively to score but we just didn't hit the shots."

Three of UVic's four losses have come against UBC this season. Fortunately for the Vikes, they won't have to face the T-Birds any more in the regular season. Their next game in Canada West play comes on Jan. 2 against the University of the Fraser Valley in Abbotsford.

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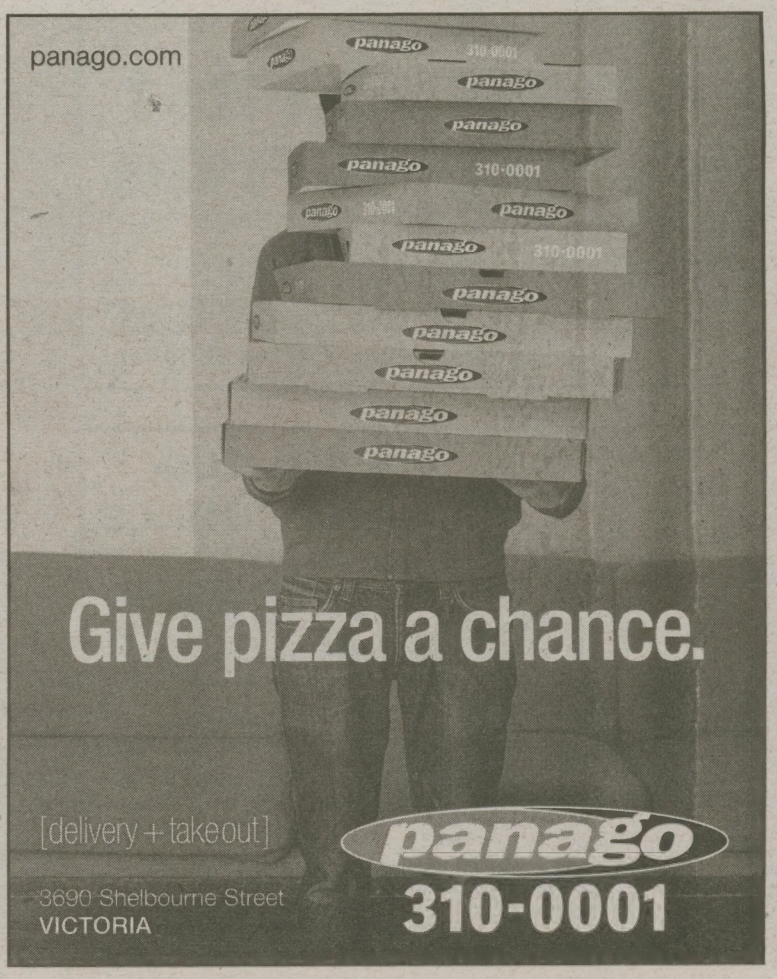

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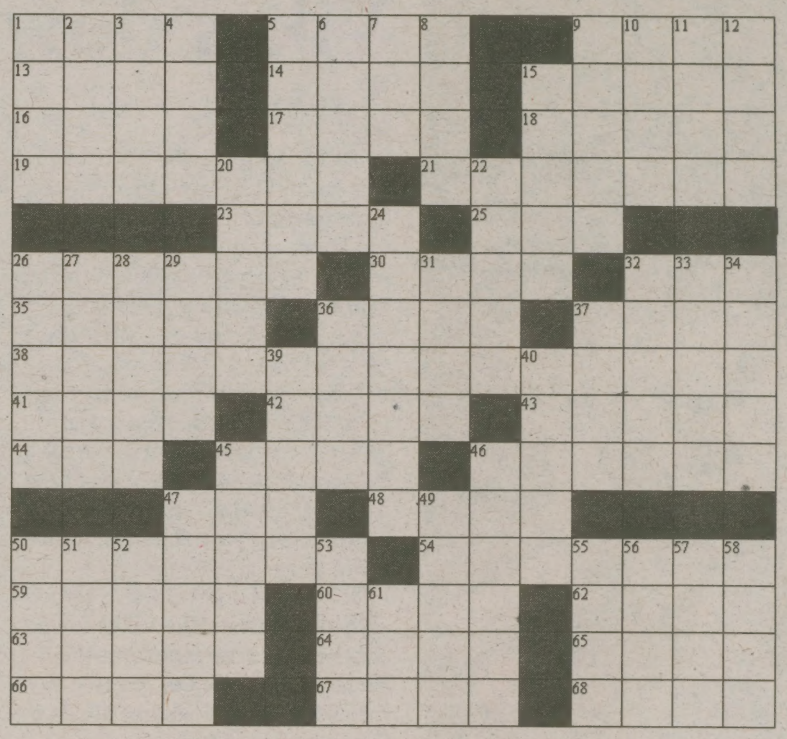
The Ontarion Crossword

by Krystian Imgrum



ACROSS

1. Openly declare
5. Like Bert and Ernie
9. Criticize harshly
13. Cleave
14. Take to the streets
15. Rubberneck
16. Where the sailors are
17. Bones (Lt.)
18. Canvas shelters
19. Ontarian endangered species (2 wds.)
21. Ontarian species of concern (2 wds.)
23. Entreaty
25. Zone or table
26. Graduate project
30. "____ it", Jackson hit
32. Manicurist's locale
35. Plant excretion
36. AA members
37. Love action?
38. Ontarian threatened species (3 wds.)
41. Barley malts
42. Successful songs
43. The Lady, or the ____
44. Canadian trading org.
45. Place
46. Salmon side
47. Quarterback Marino
48. Where to get bresaola
50. Ontarian threatened species (2 wds.)
54. Ontarian species of concern
59. Eagle's nest
60. Id counterparts
62. Nucleus
63. Rotates
64. Memo
65. Fencer's sword
66. Arcade classic
67. Lemon drinks
68. Act

DOWN

1. Muscat native
2. Popular card
3. Done
4. Put on the bottle
5. Lurks
6. Church feature
7. ____ Alamos
8. Strike with 65 across
9. Trigger or Traveller
10. Kristin Kreuk role
11. Crafts' partner
12. Hick hat
15. Daring display
26. What Andy Rooney does
22. Slightest
24. Gave up
26. Take out
27. Fixes, medically
28. English county
29. Plays musical chairs
31. Greek vowels
32. Fake
33. Flush game
34. Copycats
36. Irksome mood
37. Use scissors
39. Horned beast, for short
40. Spill red wine
45. Vaults
46. Shuts
47. Extremely anxious
49. Ham it up
50. Desperate breath
51. Take back: (abbr.)
52. DJ Davis
53. Lucy Lawless role
55. Performed well
56. Lariat
57. Native Manitobans
58. Give attention
61. The big guy

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6			9					7
	7				1		2	

This Week @ Felicita's
Dec 4 - Canucks PPV @ Detroit: 4:30pm
- UVic Idol signup
- Rockstar tasting between 7 - 9pm
- Karaoke @ 9pm
Dec 5 - LAST DAY OF CLASSES!
- Valhala mile fundraiser @ 8pm
Dec 9 - Canucks @ Nashville: 5pm
Dec 11 - Karaoke @ 9pm
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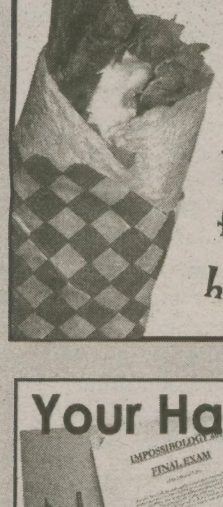
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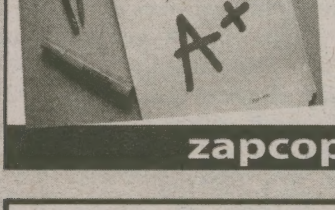
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THURSDAY, DEC. 4

Stressed? Come Walk the Labyrinth
Monday - Thursday, 9 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Chapel
Find some calm in the midst of a stressful day. Come after a tough exam. Come to reconnect with your divine centre. Come alone or with a friend.

Simple instructions for meditative walking of the labyrinth are posted. Event runs until Dec. 11.

Fee: Free
Info: 250-721-8338
chaplain@uvic.ca

In Search of Lost Time: Cameron Ian MacLeod (1958-1983)
All Day
McPherson Library Gallery
The McPherson Library Gallery presents an exhibit of recently acquired works by Cameron Ian MacLeod, a student of such influential painters as Jack Shadbolt, Gordon A. Smith, and Takao Tanabe.

The exhibition will feature his work, along with selected pieces by three of his mentors. This exhibit runs until Jan. 15, 2009.

Fee: Free
Info: 250-721-6562
maltpub@finearts.uvic.ca

FRIDAY, DEC. 5

Predicting species and community responses to accelerated global change; what we've learned from montane lakes and ponds
2:30 - 4 p.m.
Cunningham Building, 146
A seminar given by Dr. Wendy Palen, Department of Biological Sciences, SFU.

Fee: Free
Info: Steve Perlman
250-721-6319
stevep@uvic.ca

Sell Out: Holiday Art Auction
6:30 p.m. - 12 a.m.
Visual Arts Building
VASA is holding a holiday art auction in The Visual Arts Building on campus.

There will be a live auction, open studio tour, food, music, and art show. It is a semi-formal event.

Please come enjoy, and celebrate with us. There will be great work for sale.

Fee: Free
Info: vasa.sellout@gmail.com

SATURDAY, DEC. 6

University of Victoria Chorus and Orchestra
8 - 10 p.m.
University Centre, Farquhar Auditorium
Featuring Prokofiev's great cantata Alexander Nevsky and Handel's Dixit Dominus (Psalm 109) with guest soloists János Sándor, and conductor Susan Young.

Fee: $16 & $12
Info: Jill Michalski
250-721-7904
michalsk@uvic.ca

FRIDAY, DEC. 12

Science and Myth in Nicander's Theriaca
2:30 - 4:30 p.m.
Clearihue, B415
This lecture will examine the means through which Nicander integrates myth into his work while maintaining a scientific tone and examine a key passage in the Theriaca that demonstrates the various ways in which Nicander establishes his poetic voice through the adaptation of myth and through allusion to other authors.

Fee: Free
Info: Sonja Bermingham
250-721-8514
sberming@uvic.ca

Surplus Furniture Sales
Noon - 5 p.m.
Parking Lot 3
Desks, tables, chairs, shelf units, filing cabinets, VCRs, TVs, millwork pieces, random misc. items. New stock weekly. All "gently used" by UVic staff and students.

Info: Stephen Wylie
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swylie@uvic.ca

LIVE CONCERTS

THURSDAY, DEC. 4

Lesbian Fist Magnet, Dirty & The Derelicts, The Sweathogz @ Evolution
9 p.m. - 2 a.m.
Tickets available at Old School Tattoos. (No Minors).

Fee: $9 at the door
$7 in advance

Rock, Rock, Rock n' Roll Market, the MAGS, Die Poor, Haddonfield @ Logan's Pub
5 p.m. - 1 a.m.
(No Minors).

Fee: $7 at the door
$5 in advance

Out There: A Screening of Queer Shorts UVIC's "Queering the Screen" Cinema Class @ Lucky Bar
9 - 11 p.m.
(No Minors).

Fee: Free

DJ Longshanks @ Lucky Bar
10 p.m.
Lucky's city-wide search for the next best Victoria DJ has reached it's final stage, and you get to help pick the winner. (No Minors).

Fee: $5

FRIDAY, DEC. 5

Get Up to Get Down, Rocky Mountain Rebel Music, The Goodbye to Maya Party, The Timid Pimp and the Know How Sugar @ Felicita's Pub
9 p.m. - 1 a.m., doors at 8 p.m.
all proceeds go to expanding the vallhalla park. (No Minors).

Fee: $7 at the door
$5 in advance

Lord Beginner, espionage, Occlusion @ Lucky Bar
10 p.m.
(No Minors).
Fee: $10

Nine Inch Nails pre and post-concert party @ Soprano's
4 p.m. - 2 a.m., doors at Noon
Come to Soprano's before the show and get a wristband that will give you free entry after the show. (No Minors).

Fee: $7 or Free with wristband

Aint' Dead Yet @ Swans
8:30 p.m. - 1 a.m.
(No Minors).

Fee: Free

SATURDAY, DEC. 6

Jon & Roy Holiday Special @ Alix Goolden Performance Hall
8 p.m., doors at 7:30 p.m.
Tickets available at Lyle's Place, ticketweb.ca, Ditch Records & CDs, www.jonandroy.ca. (All Ages).

Fee: $18

Kid on the Pavement, Alex Bueno, Riley Smith @ Black Stilt Coffee House
7 - 10:30 p.m.
(All Ages)

Fee: $5

horizons, Beat Kids, Everyone Everywhere, The Grave Life, Apparatus Theory, Skies Kill @ Camas Book and Infoshop
7:30 - 11 p.m., doors at 7 p.m.
(All Ages).

Fee: $8

Vancouver Recording Artist Jessica Beach @ Hermann's Jazz Club
8 p.m.
Jessica performs solo with just her sweet soulful voice and a grand piano at Hermann's.

Her new CD will be available too. Tickets available at the door. (All Ages).

Fee: $10

David P. Smith, Walrus, the bash brothers, Hearse, and other special guests, MC J McLaughlin @ Logan's Pub
8 p.m.
Come "Rock Your Awareness" at this benefit show for AIDS Vancouver Island in honor of the 20th Anniversary of World AIDS Day. (No Minors).

Fee: $10

Woodhands @ Lucky Bar
10 p.m.
Toronto Paper Bag recording artists Woodhands play a special live performance. (No Minors).

Fee: $8

Casey Ryder Trio, Sundogs Western Swing, Twango Gypsy Jazz, Milkweed, Victoria 4 acapella @ White Eagle Hall
8 p.m. - 12 p.m., doors at 7 p.m.
Swing to the Sounds of the 30's 40's and 50's with live Bands. (All Ages).

Fee: $10

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Interested in Suicide Prevention in the classroom? Reach out to youth in Middle and High schools.

Community Education Volunteers needed. Contact Mary at 386.6328 ext 222 or visit website: www.needcrisis.bc.ca.

Training begins Jan. 12, 2009

Sunday, Dec. 14: Prevedoros, Golden and Joy, create an exotic, unique synthesis including eastern, Latin jazz, African, pan-Asian and Celtic folk influences. 7:30 p.m. at Norway House, 1110 Hillside Avenue. $5. First hour open stage.

THE MARTLET

Fast on the draw?
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Draw for the Martlet!
Email grafx@martlet.ca

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Worth checking into.

Attention Students

DENTAL COSTS are now fully covered by your student fees.

YOU no longer have to pay any portion of the costs for approved procedures if you book with a registered Dentist in the National Student Health Network Plan

As a participant in this program, we can offer you this advantage. Come and see us for the best in quality dental care offered by friendly, 'gentle' staff

Dr. David Ward, BSC, DDS, CD (McGill)
301-1842 Oak Bay Ave
Tel: 598-5441

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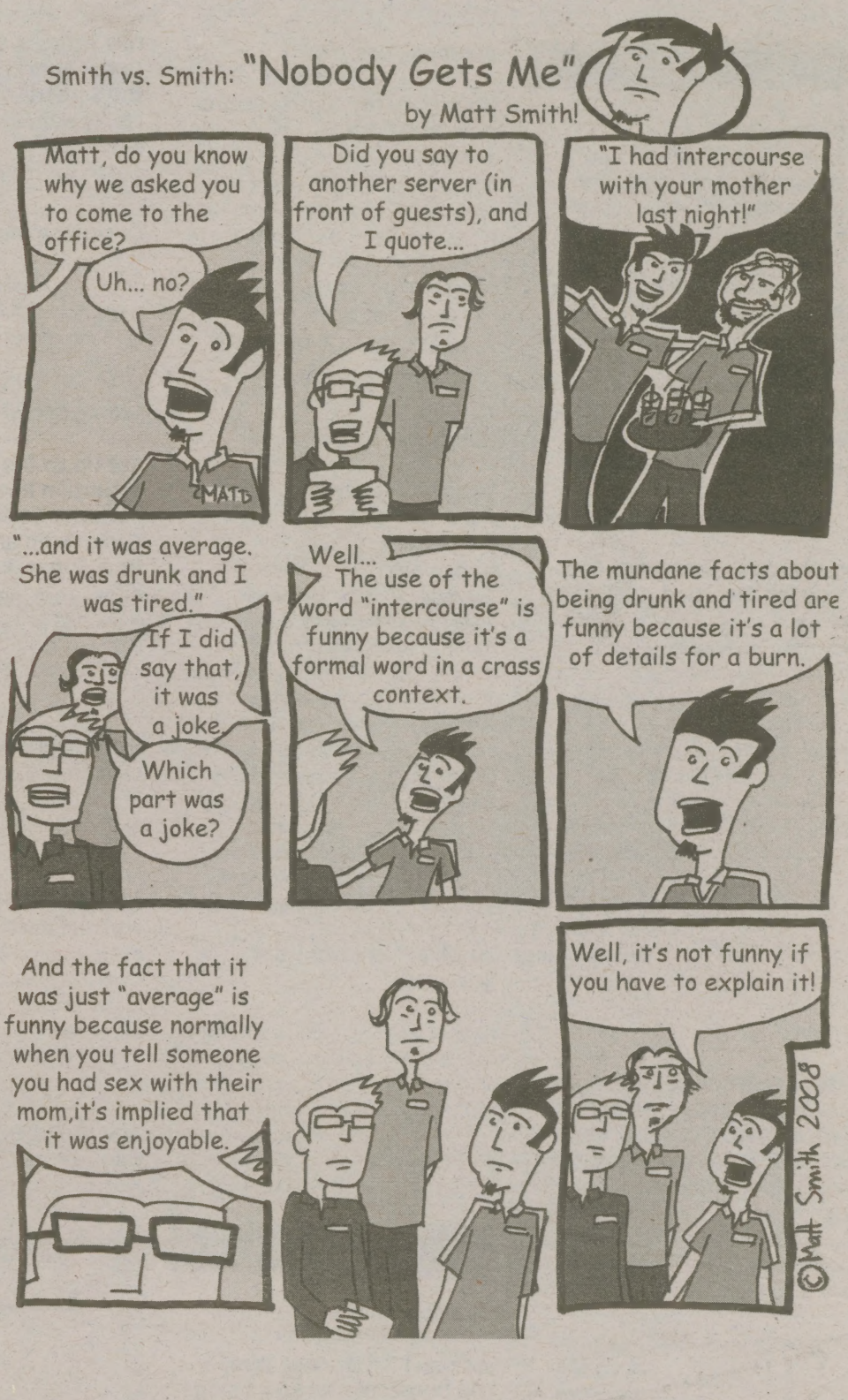
Comics

Special Checkerpop Christmas Edition

checkerpop.com

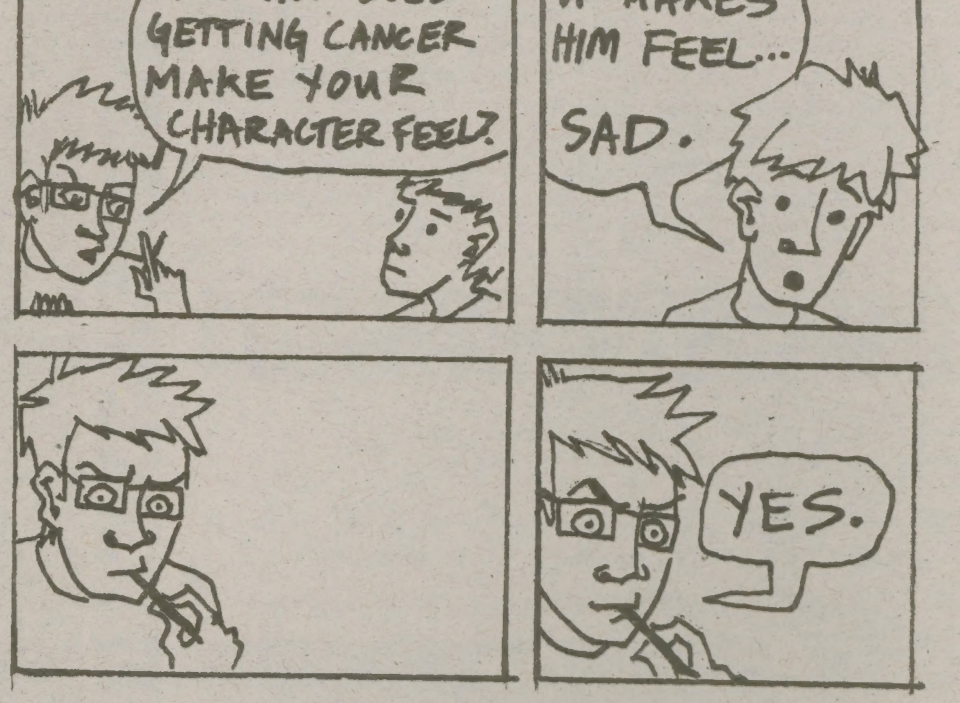
Smith vs. Smith: "Nobody Gets Me"

by Matt Smith!

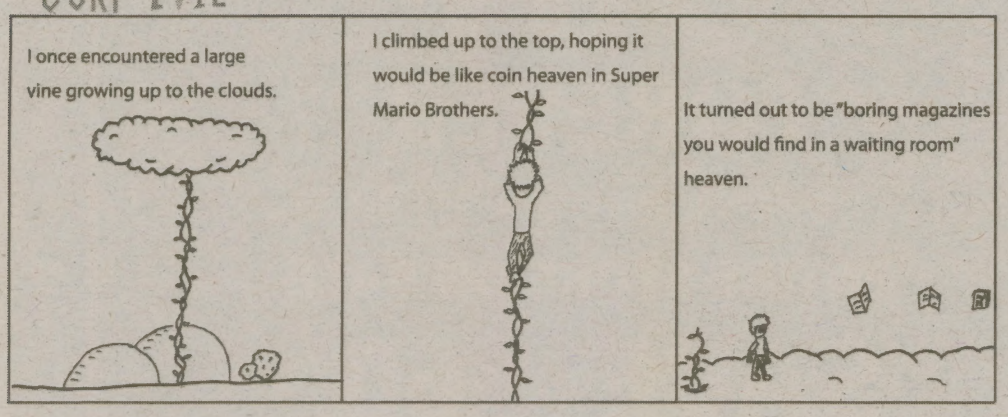

Matt, do you know why we asked you to come to the office?
Uh... no?
MATT
Did you say to another server (in front of guests), and I quote...
"I had intercourse with your mother last night!"
"...and it was average. She was drunk and I was tired."
If I did say that, it was a joke.
Which part was a joke?
Well... The use of the word "intercourse" is funny because it's a formal word in a crass context.
The mundane facts about being drunk and tired are funny because it's a lot of details for a burn.
And the fact that it was just "average" is funny because normally when you tell someone you had sex with their mom, it's implied that it was enjoyable.
Well, it's not funny if you have to explain it!
©Matt Smith 2008

THEATRE SCHOOL MOMENTS

by Tk.



CORP EvIL


I once encountered a large vine growing up to the clouds.
I climbed up to the top, hoping it would be like coin heaven in Super Mario Brothers.
It turned out to be "boring magazines you would find in a waiting room" heaven.

North-East Lynx

Run along now... Remember to be good. Ho. Ho. Ho. Right?
Claus.
You! What are you doing here?
So you remember me, hey? We have some unfinished business...
Fuck me...
Pm08

northeastlynx@gmail.com

Sticks With Stones